

State of Illinois Uniform Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)
Summary Information

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	Diana Fuller (diana.fuller@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY25-2
Funding Opportunity Title	Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program
CSFA Number	420-30-3197
CSFA Popular Name	CEJA Workforce Network Program
Anticipated Number of Awards	4
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$13,500,000
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Technical Assistance Session	

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program 2025 NOFO ID: 3197-3021

For information about grants please visit <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/granteeresources.html>.

A. Program Description

Notice of Funding Opportunity Intent

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (the “Department” or “DCEO”) is issuing this Notice of Funding Opportunity (“NOFO”) to support the Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, a network of 14 Illinois Clean Jobs Program delivery hub sites (“Workforce Hubs”) throughout the State to recruit and provide clean energy and related workforce training to jobseekers.

Workforce Hubs will engage with potential employers, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and community-based and labor-based training providers to ensure program-eligible individuals across the State have dedicated and sustained support to enter and build clean energy careers. The Workforce Hubs will be run by community-based organizations and utilize a Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework (<https://dceo.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dceo/ceja/documents/clean-jobs-curriculum-framework.pdf>) to provide clean jobs training and a career pathway for participants.

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also includes funding for Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program services to support participants of the Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program with “wrap-around” and support services to improve access and successful program outcomes.

Program Description

This Notice of Funding Opportunity sets forth the requirements for funding the Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (20 ILCS 730/5-20) and the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program (20 ILCS 730/5-30), as specified by the Energy Transition Act as part of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, PA 102-662 (“Climate and Equitable Jobs Act” or “CEJA”). CEJA establishes several new workforce programs, administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, to expand the clean energy workforce in Illinois and accelerate the adoption of clean energy sources, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency.

Investments in clean energy technology and infrastructure, funded through CEJA and other state and federal funding sources, will generate significant construction, installation, maintenance, and repair activity in Illinois. Historically, these investments have not benefited all Illinois’ communities and workers. The Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program is one of several programs created by CEJA to grow the clean energy workforce in a more equitable way.

To create a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers prepared for careers in clean energy, the Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program creates 14 regional Clean Jobs Workforce Hubs throughout the State to provide clean energy and related workforce and training opportunities to participants, engage with potential employers, and form partnerships to ensure participants have dedicated and sustained support to build careers in clean energy and related sector jobs. The main objective of the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program is to increase access to and opportunities for education, training, and support services to help program-eligible individuals succeed in the labor market generally and the clean energy sector specifically. Upon completion, participants will be prepared for entry-level clean energy jobs.

The regional Clean Jobs Workforce Hubs include:

- Chicago (South Side)
- Chicago (Southwest and West Sides)

- Waukegan
- Rockford
- Aurora
- Joliet
- Peoria
- Champaign
- Danville
- Decatur
- Carbondale
- East St. Louis
- Alton
- Kankakee (effective July 1, 2025)

Workforce Hub Locations Funded

The Department has identified grantees for several of the Clean Jobs Workforce Hub regions under previous NOFOs. **This NOFO will award grants to fund at least one Clean Jobs Workforce Network Hub (Workforce Hub) site that is located in or near Carbondale, Peoria, Danville, and Kankakee.** Each Workforce Hub will serve its “equity investment eligible communities” and “equity investment eligible persons” (as defined in this NOFO) that are located in or near the Workforce Hub’s location. If the Workforce Hub site is not physically located within the Workforce Hub municipality listed below, then the applicant must demonstrate that the Workforce Hub site is geographically “near” and readily accessible to individuals within the Workforce Hub municipality.

Workforce Hub Components

The Workforce Hub grantees and project partners will deliver the following five major program components:

1. **Participant recruitment.** Provide outreach, in coordination with Energy Transition Navigators and other community partners, to recruit program-eligible individuals for the training program.
2. **Training delivery.** Provide training, certification preparation, job readiness, and skill development to program participants, utilizing the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework (described below) to prepare people for entry-level clean energy jobs. The training will consist of a bridge program (essential employability skills and clean energy basics) and at least two job-specific training options, selected by each Workforce Hub and based on local clean energy workforce needs.
3. **Employer partnerships.** Develop partnerships with entities that provide clean energy jobs, including businesses, nonprofits, and worker-owned cooperatives, to ensure Program participants have priority access to employment training, work-based learning opportunities, and hiring activities.
4. **Barrier reduction services.** Provide supportive services to mitigate challenges participants may face in accessing and completing the training. Services may include but are not limited to transportation costs, technology assistance, emergency bill payments, personal health, childcare assistance, tuition assistance, food assistance, referrals to other services, tutoring, and more.
5. **Transition services.** Provide transition services to participants following completion to help them find jobs, succeed in the workplace, and build their careers.

The grants to operate and administer the Workforce Hubs will be awarded to community-based organizations (see definition below) that demonstrate a plan to implement a Workforce Hub in one of the Workforce Hub locations with the program design elements that meet the requirements described in this NOFO. A single organization may propose to provide all elements required or may partner with or subcontract to other entities for the provision of portions of program elements, including, but not limited to, recruitment, job skills training, technical training, transition services, barrier reduction supportive services, or the provision of other support functions for program delivery compliance.

Program Coordination

The Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program is part of a highly interconnected set of Illinois statewide clean energy workforce and contractor development programs. The Workforce Hubs will be required to collaborate and coordinate with the programs listed below as they become available. Successful applicants will demonstrate awareness of these programs and recognition of the need for collaboration and coordination. Background information about each program is available here:

- Illinois Energy Transition Navigator Program:
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs/energy-transition-navigator-program.html>
- Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program:
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs/climate-works-pre-apprenticeship-program.html>
- Returning Resident Clean Jobs Program:
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs/returning-resident-clean-jobs-program.html>
- Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program:
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs/clean-energy-contractor-incubator-program.html>
- Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program:
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs/clean-energy-primes-contractor-accelerator-program.html>
- Future Energy Jobs Act Programs:
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/workforce-training-programs.html#solar-training>
- See also the Frequently Asked Questions (<https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs/ceja-faq.html>) to learn more about the programs.

Program Definitions

This NOFO will use the definitions established in the Energy Transition Act of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, including the definitions for "equity investment eligible person," "equity investment eligible community," "community-based organization," and "clean energy jobs." It will also use the State of Illinois definitions for bridge programs, work-based learning, and core equity values.

"Community-based organization" means an organization that:

- provides employment, skill development, or related services to members of the community;
- includes community colleges, nonprofits, and local governments;
- has at least one main operating office in the community or region it serves; and
- demonstrates relationships with local residents and other organizations serving the community.

"Equity investment eligible person" or "eligible person" is a person who would most benefit from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination and foster sustainable economic growth. Specifically, eligible persons mean:

- persons whose primary residence is in an equity investment eligible community; or
- persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system; or
- persons who were formerly incarcerated.

"Equity investment eligible communities" are the geographic areas throughout Illinois that would most benefit from equitable investments by the State, which are designed to combat discrimination and foster sustainable economic growth. Specifically, equity investment eligible communities include the following areas:

- Restore, Reinvest and Renew Areas (R3 Areas) as established pursuant to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (410 ILCS 705), where residents have historically been excluded from economic opportunities, including opportunities in the energy sector. Eligible R3 Areas are defined in the R3 service map (<https://r3.illinois.gov/eligibility>). Criteria for defining R3 Areas include rates of gun injury, unemployment, child poverty, incarceration with Illinois Department of Corrections, and historic disinvestment; and
- Environmental justice communities, as defined by the Illinois Power Agency pursuant to the Illinois Power Agency Act (20 ILCS 3855), but excluding racial and ethnic indicators, where

residents have historically been subject to disproportionate pollution burdens, including pollution from the energy sector. For more information on the criteria and for a map that defines these areas in Illinois, refer to the Illinois Solar For All webpage on Environmental Justice Communities (<https://illinoisfa.com/environmental-justice-communities>).

- The Equity Investment Eligible Community Map (<https://energyequity.illinois.gov/resources/equity-investment-eligible-community-map.html>) defines the areas that satisfy the criteria above for both R3 Areas and Environmental justice communities.

“Equity focused populations” means:

- low-income persons;
- persons residing in equity investment eligible communities;
- persons who identify as black, indigenous, and people of color;
- formerly convicted persons;
- persons who are or were in the child welfare system;
- energy workers;
- dependents of displaced energy workers;
- women;
- LGBTQ+, transgender, or gender nonconforming persons;
- Persons with disabilities; and
- Members of any of these groups who are also youth.

“Displaced energy worker” means an energy worker who has lost employment, or is anticipated by the Department to lose employment within the next 5 years, due to the reduced operation or closure of a fossil fuel power plant, nuclear power plant, or coal mine.

“Energy worker” means a person who has been employed full-time for a period of one year or longer, and within the previous 5 years, at a fossil fuel power plant, a nuclear power plant, or a coal mine located within the State of Illinois, whether or not they are employed by the owner of the power plant or mine. Energy workers are considered to be full-time if they work at least 35 hours per week for 45 weeks a year or the 1,820 work-hour equivalent with vacations, paid holidays, and sick time, but not overtime, included in this computation. Classification of an individual as an energy worker continues for 5 years from the latest date of employment or the effective date of [the Energy Community Reinvestment Act, September 15, 2021], whichever is later.

“Clean energy jobs”, as defined in 20 ILCS 730/5-25(a), means jobs in the solar energy, wind energy, energy efficiency, energy storage, solar thermal, green hydrogen, geothermal, electrical vehicle industries, other renewable energy industries, industries achieving emission reductions, and other related sectors including related industries that manufacture, develop, build, maintain, or provide ancillary services to renewable energy resources or energy efficiency products or services, including the manufacture and installation of healthier building materials that contain fewer hazardous chemicals. “Clean energy jobs” includes administrative, sales, and other support functions within these industries and other related sector industries.

“Work-based learning”, defined in the Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary (<https://www.isbe.net/Documents/IL-Career-Pathways-Dictionary.PDF>) means work-based opportunities to practice and enhance the skills and knowledge gained in their program of study or industry training program, as well as to develop employability, and includes an assessment and recognition of acquired knowledge and skills.

- Work-based learning as defined in Perkins V legislation is “sustained interactions with industry or community professionals in real workplace settings, to the extent practicable, or simulated environments at an educational institution that fosters in-depth, firsthand engagement with the tasks required in a given career field, that are aligned to curriculum and instruction.”
- Work-based learning may include career awareness and exploration activities (guest speakers, job shadowing, mentorship) as well as workplace experience (internships, service learning, paid

work experience, on-the-job training, incumbent worker training, transitional jobs, and apprenticeships).

“Bridge programs”, as defined by the Illinois Community College Board (http://www2.iccb.org/iccb/wp-content/pdfs/shiftinggears/ICCB_2012BridgeGuide_web_REV_FEB13.pdf), are programs that prepare adults with limited academic or limited English skills to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and training leading to career-path employment in high-demand, middle- and high-skilled occupations. The goal of bridge programs is to sequentially bridge the gap between the initial skills of individuals and what they need to enter and succeed in postsecondary education and career-path employment. Bridge programs assist students in obtaining the necessary academic, employability, and technical skills through three required components:

- Contextualized instruction that integrates basic reading, math and language skills and industry/occupation knowledge.
- Career development that includes career exploration, career planning within a career area, and understanding the world of work.
- Transitional services that provide students with the information and assistance they need to successfully navigate the process of moving to credit or occupational programs.

“Core equity values”, as defined in the Illinois Office of Equity “Illinois Toward Equity Action Framework <https://ooe.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/ooe/documents/illinois-towards-equity/ite-action-framework-toolkit-3-13-23.pdf> include the following:

- Diversity is the representation of people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences.
- Inclusion is the action or state of including and feeling as an empowered sense of belonging within a group or organization.
- Accessibility according to the Office for Civil Rights at the U.S. Department of Education, is “when a person with a disability is afforded the opportunity to acquire the same information, engage in the same interactions, and enjoy the same services as a person without a disability in an equally integrated and equally effective manner, with substantially equivalent ease of use.” The Office of Equity extends accessibility beyond disability to include the creation of financially, technologically, and linguistically accessible systems, resources, and services so that all can thrive in a society.
- Each of these three foundational elements contributes to equity: The state, quality or ideal of being just, impartial, and fair. Equity must also be both structural and systemic and comprised of a robust infrastructure and dynamic process that produce equitable ideas, power, and resources.

Illinois Workforce Development Priorities

The Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program is aligned with Illinois’ workforce, education, and economic development priorities. Billions of dollars of funding in clean energy technology and infrastructure through CEJA and other state and federal funding sources over the next decade have the potential to be a catalyst for the full inclusion of program participants in the clean energy workforce. By providing training, employment, and career development, the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program will help to increase and sustain prosperity in all communities. Below are some workforce, education, and economic development priorities aligned with Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program.

Governor's Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation

Governor Pritzker issued Executive Order 2019-03 leading to the creation of the "Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation" which provides the five Action Areas listed below. This NOFO will fund projects that focus on these Action Areas.

- Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies
 - Identify high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations
 - Implement a coordinated workforce development strategy around regional clusters
- Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job

- Increase apprenticeship opportunities
- Address barriers to successful training and employment
- Establish and support equity goals and align with Perkins equity goals (see page 46-57 of Perkins plan at: <https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Perkins-Plan.pdf>)
- Connect job seekers with employers
- Shorten the time from credential to employment
- Integrate workforce services across program providers for one-stop customers

Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework

This framework defines and clarifies essential employability skills and provides a standard for the State. This framework is aligned with the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework that will be used in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program. Essential employability skills are those general skills that are required to be successful in all sectors of the labor market and are separate from the technical skills attained in career pathways or academic skills such as math and reading. The Framework includes but is not limited to personal ethics, work ethics, communication skills, and teamwork. The framework was developed through the collaboration of the Illinois Community College Board; the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity; representatives of Illinois businesses; local chambers of commerce; secondary, postsecondary, and adult educators and professionals; and other important stakeholders. The Framework can be viewed at: <https://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/illinois-essential-employability-skills-framework>.

Supportive Services

Supportive services are intended to help eligible individuals overcome financial and other barriers to participate and complete the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program. The table below summarizes supportive services paid with *Barrier Reduction Funds* that are integral to the design of successful workforce programs. Successful applicants will include delivery of these services in their program design proposal. Applicants may also propose to provide additional supportive services that are not listed to meet unique participant needs.

Types of Wrap-around Support Services (including but not limited to)	Types of Student Support Services (including but not limited to)	Types of Transition Support Services (including but not limited to)
Transportation costs, including car repairs, gas cards, or bus passes	Tutoring (especially in math)	Mentoring / Coaching
Childcare or family care	Make-up classes	Job exploration, search and placement Services
Driver's education and driver's license fees	Retesting	Other Wrap Around Supportive Services needed to obtain or retain employment
Personal health services, including dental and vision and mental health care	Educational enrichment	Resume writing and mock interviews
Emergency bill payments, rental assistance or emergency housing	Technology Assistance for virtual learning	Job fairs with clean energy employers
Referrals for other services (food, housing, rental assistance, substance use treatment)	Expenses related to certifications, testing, or applications	
Legal assistance, including record expungement		

Program Participant Requirements

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The focus of the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program is to prepare program-eligible participants to successfully gain employment in the clean energy industry.

Eligible participants for the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program include Illinois residents who are at least 18 years of age and:

Reside in an area that is:

- a. both an R3 Area as established pursuant to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act [410 ILCS 705] and an environmental justice community; or
- b. either an R3 Area as established pursuant to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act [410 ILCS 705] or an environmental justice community

or

Qualify as eligible to participate as follows:

- a. meets the definition of a displaced energy worker; or
- b. is a person who faces barriers to employment, including, but not limited to, low educational attainment, prior involvement with the criminal legal system, language barriers, or is a person who is a graduate or current member of the foster care system.

Priority of Service

The recruitment, enrollment and placement of program participants must be prioritized based on the following communities and factors, as the applicant pool allows:

- One-third of program placements are for people residing in an area that is BOTH an R3 area and an environmental justice community. Preference will be given to applicants who face barriers to employment, such as low educational attainment, prior involvement with the criminal legal system, language barriers, and applicants that are graduates of or current members of the foster care system.
- Two-thirds of program placements are for people who reside in EITHER an R3 area OR an environmental justice community. Preference will be given to applicants who face barriers to employment, such as low educational attainment, prior involvement with the criminal legal system, language barriers, and applicants that are graduates of or current members of the foster care system.
- Priority for the remaining placements must be given to displaced energy workers or persons who face barriers to employment, such as low educational attainment, prior involvement with the criminal legal system, language barriers, and applicants that are graduates of or current members of the foster care system. Refer to the definition of “Equity investment eligible communities” above for more information about R3 areas and environmental justice communities.

NOTE: DCEO recognizes that not all of the workforce hub sites will have a significant number of individuals that reside in R3 or environmental justice communities. Grantees will be required to outline the priority of service considerations in the grantee’s *Eligibility and Enrollment Policy and Procedures*.

PROGRAM DESIGN

Projects funded under this program must include the program elements that are outlined in this section. Grantees will be expected to develop policies and procedures that incorporate these program elements through the administration of the program and the delivery of program services.

1. **OVERALL PROGRAM DESIGN AND PARTNERSHIPS:** Workforce Hubs will coordinate with Energy Transition Navigators and other local and regional workforce entities to recruit, pre-screen, provide training, engage employers, and provide transition services to prepare a diverse pipeline of workers for careers in the clean energy industry. Organizations applying for funding may deliver all program elements themselves or may partner with other organizations to deliver various program elements. Where appropriate, lead applicants may enter into agreements with other organizations that can

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provide outreach and recruitment, case management, training, wrap-around supportive services, work-based learning elements, assessments, or other program elements.

2. **GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE:** Each Workforce Hub will serve participants in their proposed hub municipality and surrounding areas. Workforce Hubs are intended to reach program-eligible populations across the region and provide equitable access by locating training and services in or near equity investment eligible communities in the region.
3. **STAFFING:** Staff are required for all key program areas, including but not limited to program administration, instruction, outreach and recruitment, intake, barrier reduction services, support services, employer engagement, transition and follow-up, and program reporting and grant administration. Program staffing must ensure the quality delivery of programs and services. Staffing decisions should also consider the experience and ability of key staff to address barriers to employment of program participants, connect to equity investment eligible communities, and create a welcoming environment). Applicants will provide this information by completing Attachment 4: Staffing Plan and providing staff resumes (or descriptions and qualifications for positions that must be hired using grant funds, if awarded), instructor credentials, partnership agreements, or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs).
4. **EQUITY PROGRAM CULTURE:** Workforce hubs must utilize a program model that upholds the core values of diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and equity (defined above). These core values should inform all aspects of the program, including recruitment, partnerships, training, transition services, and barrier reducing supportive services. Programs should consider the unique background and experiences of program participants and pursue policies and practices to support all participants. Applicants must consider how their program will increase access, enrollment, and completion for program eligible persons. Programs should foster a shared identity in the program and a welcoming, inclusive environment for participants with different backgrounds.
5. **COORDINATION:** Workforce Hubs shall coordinate with other CEJA-funded programs as they become available, including the Energy Transition Navigators Program, the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program, and the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program. In addition, workforce hubs should coordinate with Local Workforce Innovation Areas and other local and regional workforce entities. Workforce Hubs are also expected to coordinate with building trades, industry contractors, contractor associations, community colleges, community-based organizations, and secondary schools, among others. Workforce Hubs are expected to develop structured pathways (in partnership with key stakeholders in the industry) for program graduates to transition successfully into clean energy jobs following program completion.
6. **OUTREACH & RECRUITMENT:** After the Energy Transition Navigator program has been implemented and is in operation, Workforce Hubs shall coordinate outreach and recruitment efforts with Energy Transition Navigators, as specified in CEJA (20 ILCS 730/5-35). Energy Transition Navigators will work with Workforce Hubs to provide information and consultation to program eligible persons. Navigators work in coordination with Workforce Hubs to educate program participant candidates about careers in clean energy industry sectors to ensure the training opportunities align with their career interests. Recruitment and outreach strategies to enroll program-eligible persons must be equitable and inclusive of all populations, including equity focused populations (see definitions above). Outreach strategies should help eligible persons make informed decisions about their participation and career paths. Workforce Hubs must coordinate closely with the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program, when it is in operation, to support participants who have received clean jobs training while incarcerated and who have recently been released from custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections. Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program grantees may refer their participants to Workforce Hubs for additional training, transition services, and wrap-around supports as needed. The Grantee's outreach and recruitment policy and procedures will be required to describe the priority of service considerations outlined in this NOFO.

7. **APPLICATION & INTAKE:** Workforce Hubs shall review potential participants' eligibility for the program through a pre-screen assessment, application, and interview. Requirements are outlined on page 7 of this NOFO. Workforce Hubs are required to use provided pre-screen assessments, applications, supportive service assessments, and commitment agreements. The intake process should help participants determine which hub services best meet their interest (suitability) and needs (ability) to give them the best opportunity for success in a clean energy career. Participant candidates who do not meet the minimum program requirements shall be directed to other workforce programs and educational services in their communities, such as free literacy, GED, and ESL classes. The Grantee's enrollment policy and procedures will be required to describe the priority of service considerations outlined in this NOFO.

SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: Workforce Hubs will administer the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program to provide services to participants in overcoming barriers to successful program participation. At a minimum, applicants must offer the support services listed above, based on an assessment of the participant's needs.

Workforce Hubs must have the ability to provide flexible, timely services and funds to address the unique and often time-sensitive barriers that may arise during participants' training. They should have strong connections to other agencies and community-based organizations to facilitate the coordination of services. These barrier reduction services should also be offered to program completers based on an assessment of the support needed to transition to employment and be retained in the job (up to one year after completion).

Workforce Hubs shall provide student support services to assist participants in maximizing training program success and obtaining the program's offered certifications/credentials. Allowable program costs may include tutoring services, mentorships, retesting and make-up sessions, or other educational enrichment. Workforce Hubs should work with other partner institutions to coordinate education and learning, necessary support and retention services. Grantees will be required to develop a supportive services policy and procedure that is consistent with the program guidelines.

8. **STIPENDS:** Workforce Hubs shall offer stipends, funded by the Workforce Hubs Program, to help participants stay financially solvent during the training period. The Department acknowledges that the training offerings will vary in length/duration and in the number of hours each day and each week. Given this variation, the Department encourages setting stipends at a rate that encourages participation and retention through the program. The Department will accept proposals that offer performance-based stipends at \$13 per instructional training hour attended by participant. Performance-based stipends are paid based on a participant's attendance and performance in the training program (i.e., passing training assessments, earning credentials, successfully completing training modules, demonstrating technical skills, etc.). A stipend is a payment made to a trainee or learner for living expenses, unlike a salary or wages which are paid to an employee. A stipend is not considered wages, so Social Security or Medicare taxes are not withheld. However, it still counts as taxable income for income tax purposes. Grantees will be required to develop a stipend policy and procedure that is consistent with the program guidelines.
9. **CURRICULA AND INSTRUCTION:** When building the training curriculum, Workforce Hubs must follow the requirements and guidelines provided in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework ("Curriculum Framework," <https://dceo.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dceo/ceja/documents/clean-jobs-curriculum-framework.pdf>) to prepare participants for entry-level jobs in solar, wind, building energy efficiency, and electric vehicle maintenance, among other clean energy jobs (see definition above). The Curriculum Framework includes requirements for training, certification preparation, job readiness, and skill development, including soft skills, math skills, technical skills, certification test preparation, and other development needed. Using the Curriculum Framework, Workforce Hubs are required to provide bridge program training and at least two job-specific training options to participants.

- a. Bridge program. The bridge program (see definition above) is a portion of the overall Curriculum Framework that addresses essential employability skills and clean energy basics to help participants succeed in an array of clean energy jobs and workplaces. It prepares participants for the job-specific technical training options below. The bridge program will lead students to obtain, at a minimum, an OSHA-10 certification and a First Aid/CPR certification. Some clean energy employers may be interested in hiring people directly from the bridge program. Most participants will continue to job-specific training.
- b. Job-specific training. After participants complete the bridge program, they will be directed to different job-specific training options. Workforce Hubs are required to offer a minimum of two (2) job-specific training options. Options should be selected based on regional employer demand, training availability, and employer partnerships. Workforce hubs should have a clear knowledge of the in-demand occupations in the region when selecting job-specific training options. The following job-specific training options are included in the Curriculum Framework:
 - i. Solar Photovoltaic Training
 - ii. Energy Auditor Training
 - iii. Weatherization Training
 - iv. HVAC Training
 - v. Construction and Building Inspection Training
 - vi. Hybrid/Electric Vehicle Technician Training
 - vii. Wind Turbine Construction and Maintenance Training

Applicants may propose to offer these job-specific training options through their hub using the Curriculum Framework or may propose to connect participants to existing clean energy training programs in the region. The applicant must provide / coordinate job-specific training programs that are “qualified,” meaning that the training programs met the accreditation and/or industry recognized certification requirements of the training program. **Applicants may also propose other job-specific training options not included in the framework to meet the demand for clean energy jobs in their region. Applicants must demonstrate employer demand for these additional training options.**

NOTE: Applicants are encouraged to review the following CEJA program reports to identify current needs

- Illinois Clean Energy Jobs and Training Program Inventory
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dceo/ceja/documents/clean-jobs-curriculum-framework.pdf>
- Climate and Equitable Jobs Act Stakeholder Outreach Report
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dceo/ceja/documents/ceja-stakeholder-engagement-summary.pdf>
- Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework
<https://dceo.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dceo/ceja/documents/clean-jobs-curriculum-framework.pdf>

Applicants must submit a proposed curriculum outline including hours, instruction modules offered, length of the training, and the logistical plan for delivery found in "NOFO Attachments- IL Clean Energy Jobs Workforce Network Program" which is posted along with this NOFO (see the Excel Attachment 3: Curriculum Plan).

Evidence of support for the curricula from clean energy employer partners should be included in the application and detailed in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or partnership agreements.

10. PROGRAM DELIVERY. Workforce Hubs are encouraged to implement flexible and interactive program delivery methods to improve accessibility and help participants overcome barriers that stand in the way of their participation or success. Instructional delivery strategies to improve student outcomes may include but are not limited to:

- a. Content that can be completed on-demand when convenient for participants
 - b. Virtual or face-to-face instruction options
 - c. Interactive learning tools, such as alternative reality or virtual reality technology
 - d. Full-time and part-time training options
 - e. Open entry and exit options
 - f. Modular programming that avoids redundant training for participants who may already possess given qualifications
 - g. Ongoing guidance and instruction after completion to help with job placements
 - h. Alternative testing approaches to demonstrate material mastery
12. **WORK-BASED LEARNING:** Partnering with local employers to provide work-based learning opportunities is instrumental in creating employment opportunities for participants with barriers to employment. Workforce Hubs shall provide work-based learning opportunities (see definition above) for participants. A minimum of 10% of the training should be devoted to work-based learning. Work-based learning may include career awareness and exploration activities (guest speakers, job shadowing, mentorship) as well as workplace experience (service learning, paid work experience, on-the-job training, job site practicums, transitional jobs, and apprenticeships). Work-based learning opportunities may include job site practicums, supervised by the program instructors and coordinated with employers, community-based organizations, contractors, or government entities that give participants opportunities to put into practice what they learned in the classroom. Workforce hubs are also encouraged to facilitate on- the-job training placements and apprenticeships as appropriate.
13. **TRANSITION SERVICES & FOLLOW-UP:** Workforce Hubs are required to assist students in transitioning to clean energy jobs or advanced training opportunities after program completion. Workforce Hubs are required to provide continued case management and transition services to program participants as they complete the program based on an assessment of the participant's needs. Transition services may include, but are not limited to, mock interviews, application preparation, resume writing, referral to a career counselor, and job search assistance. Workforce Hubs should make follow up services available to participants for at least one year following training program completion and offer transition services to help meet the career goals of the participant.
14. **DATA TRACKING AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT:** Workforce Hubs must track the data elements included in the CEJA legislation and provide quarterly reports including:
 - a. Demographic data, including racial, gender, residency in eligible communities, and geographic distribution data, on Program trainees who are placed in employment, including the percentages of trainees by race, gender, and geographic categories in each individual job type or category and whether employment is union, nonunion, or nonunion via temporary agency;
 - b. Trainee job acquisition and retention statistics, including the duration of employment (start and end dates of hires) by race, gender, and geography;
 - c. Hourly wages, including hourly overtime pay rate, and benefits of trainees placed into employment by race, gender, and geography;
 - d. Percentage of jobs by race, gender, and geography held by Program trainees or graduates that are full-time equivalent positions, meaning that the position held is full-time, direct, and permanent based on 2,080 hours worked per year (paid directly by the employer, whose activities, schedule, and manner of work the employer controls, and receives pay and benefits in the same manner as permanent employees); and
 - e. Qualitative data consisting of open-ended reporting on pertinent issues, including, but not limited to, qualitative descriptions accompanying metrics or identifying key successes and challenges.

Workforce Hubs must also track job retention rates for at least two years after job placement. Note that this may require applicants to identify how they will track the grant activities and outcomes after the grant period is over. Workforce Hubs will perform data tracking and use reporting systems as directed by the Department.

15. **OUTCOME ASSESSMENT.** Applicants must describe an approach that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the program and how this information will be used to improve program delivery. This assessment may include surveys of program graduates regarding overall satisfaction with the training activities delivered and appropriateness to the targeted job opportunities, surveys of employers concerning the comprehensiveness of coverage of required job skills, etc. In addition, the assessment plan should indicate how the results of the assessment activities will be used to improve the training program in a continuous manner. Grant recipients will also be required to cooperate with external evaluation efforts, as directed by the Department.

Program History

The Department has identified grantees for several of the Clean Jobs Workforce Hubs Program under previous NOFOS in 2023 and 2024. This NOFO will only award grants to fund Clean Jobs Workforce Network Hub sites in Carbondale, Peoria, Danville, and Kankakee.

Performance Goals and Measures

The goals and anticipated outcomes of the program, include number of participants served, number of certifications achieved, number of individuals who complete the different job-specific training options, numbers of participants employed in clean energy jobs post-graduation or enrolled in other advanced training programs. The performance goals and measures will be entered in *Attachment 2: Activity and Outcomes of the "Workbook Attachments 1-5 IL Clean Energy Jobs Workforce Network Program"* which is posted along with this NOFO.

Other Information

N/A

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing state funds appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly under Public Act 103-589. Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is up to approximately \$10 million for the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and up to approximately \$3.5 million for the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Services Program for a statewide total of up to \$13.5 million for the first 12 months of the program. Please note that DCEO will issue one grant award that will include funding for both of these programs.

- The initial grant awards will range from approximately \$500,000 to \$3,000,000 for the delivery of the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program in each region identified in Section A of this NOFO.
- The initial grant awards range from approximately \$500,000 to \$1,000,000 for the delivery of the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction services to support the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program in each of the regions identified in this NOFO.
- The initial grant awards for the two programs combined will range from approximately \$1,000,000 to \$4,000,000 for each Workforce Hub location identified in this NOFO. The Department expects to make one award per open region (Carbondale, Danville, Peoria, Kankakee) through this NOFO.

Anticipated start date for awards is September 1, 2025. The period of performance is expected to be September 1, 2025 through August 31, 2026.

The Department intends to offer up to two (2) twelve (12) month renewals for each award based on the initial performance of the grantee. Additional funds of up to approximately \$39,000,000 may be available for each of the twelve (12) month renewable periods for the entire network of CEJA workforce hub grantees.

The budget for this program must include allowable, reasonable and allocable cost to the Clean Job Workforce Network Program and the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction funds as appropriate. The

Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program will utilize a performance-based payment model for delivery of Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program funds (but not Energy Transition Barrier Reduction funds).

Performance-based payments will be based on four factors: enrollments, completions, transitions, and close-out reports. For more information, see section H.

Applicants must submit a project narrative that describes in detail how the award will be executed. The project narrative should include enough information for DCEO to understand the scope of the project, the budget, including a detailed breakdown of the costs associated with each budget line and any additional necessary detail to enable DCEO to manage the grant agreement activity against planned project performance. The Project Narrative must include evidence of capacity, quality and need as defined in Section E.1.

The release of this NOFO does not obligate the Department to make an award.

C. Eligibility Information

An entity must be registered in the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal, <https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>, at the time of grant application. The portal will verify that the entity:

- Has a valid FEIN number (<https://www.irs.gov/individuals/international-taxpayers/taxpayer-identification-numbers-tin#:~:text=You%20can%20use%20the%20IRS%27s,for%20Individual%20Taxpayer%20Identification%20Number>);
- Has a current SAM.gov registration (<https://sam.gov>), SAM.gov registrations must be marked as “public” to allow the GATA Grantee Portal to expedite the review of the federal information;
- Has a valid UEI number (<https://sam.gov>);
- Is not on the Federal Excluded Parties List (verified at <https://sam.gov>);
- Is in Good Standing with the Illinois Secretary of State, as applicable (https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/business_services/corp.html);
- Is not on the Illinois Stop Payment list (verified once entity is registered in GATA Grantee Portal); and
- Is not on the Department of Healthcare and Family Services Provider Sanctions list (<https://www.illinois.gov/hfs/oig/Pages/SanctionsList.aspx>).

Entities on the Illinois Stop Payment List and/or the Federal Excluded Parties List at time of application submission will not be considered for an award.

An automated email notification to the entity alerts them of “qualified” status or informs how to remediate a negative verification (e.g., not in good standing with the Secretary of State). A federal Debarred and Suspended status cannot be remediated.

Pursuant to the policy of the Illinois Office of the Comptroller, to receive grant funds from the State of Illinois, a grantee must be considered a regarded entity by the IRS for federal income tax purposes. Disregarded entities will not be eligible to receive grant funds.

1. Eligible Applicants include:

Eligible applicants are community-based organizations, defined as organizations that:

- Provide employment, skill development or related services to members of the community;
- Includes community colleges, nonprofits, and local governments;
- Has at least one main operating office in the community or region it serves; and

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- Demonstrates relationships with residents and other organizations serving the community.

Competitive applications will include a team of multiple partner organizations that collectively demonstrate the following:

- The ability to effectively serve all individuals, including diverse and equity focused populations by providing employment services;
- Agreements with employers, nonprofit organizations, or other industry organizations for work-based learning opportunities and to facilitate job placement or on-the-job training opportunities.
- The ability to deliver the Clean Energy Jobs Curriculum Framework, including meeting instructor training and certification requirements. The Curriculum Framework outlines instructor requirements for the Bridge Program training component, as well as the job- specific training options. For instance, solar training must be delivered by a NABCEP registered training provider.
- The ability to recruit, prescreen and provide training to prepare workers for employment in the clean energy industry.
- Capacity to provide supportive services, ongoing engagement during and beyond training, and job retention services to participants.
- Capacity to offer training in locations that are accessible to equity investment eligible persons in the service region.

The Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program applicant team must also deliver the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program services for Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program participants and enrollees. The main grantee may propose to deliver the barrier reduction services themselves or may partner with a different community-based organization or other nonprofit to deliver these services. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction services must be delivered by a community-based organization or other nonprofit that has:

- The ability to effectively serve diverse and underrepresented populations in the proposed region;
- Capacity to provide individualized supportive services and distribute barrier reduction funds in an efficient and timely manner;
- Strong connections to other community-based organizations and local agencies for referrals and warm hand-offs; and
- Strong connections to and experience serving equity investment eligible communities within the service region(s).

The applicant team must have the capacity to deliver the services outlined above, including a demonstrated ability to hire and retain project staff and instructors when the grant commences. Applicants may apply to deliver the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program training in one or more of the designated hub areas. Proposals must provide performance data and outcomes from relevant prior work to demonstrate capacity and effectiveness.

Experienced and New Providers: This NOFO will consider organizations that have experience with and a trajectory of delivering clean energy job training programs. Applicants that have not provided clean energy or related sector training but have experience serving equity investment eligible people in their communities are encouraged to apply in partnership with other relevant organizations that have experience in effective design and delivery of the required services.

Organizations that wish to apply to deliver multiple CEJA workforce programs (including the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program, the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, the Energy Transition Navigator Program, the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program, and the Clean Jobs Contractor Incubator Program) as well as other DCEO workforce programs

(including Illinois Works, Apprenticeship Illinois, Youth Career Pathways, and JTED) must consider their capacity to deliver all proposed services if their proposals are selected.

The Department complies with all applicable provisions of state and federal laws and regulations pertaining to nondiscrimination, sexual harassment and equal employment opportunity including, but not limited to: The Illinois Human Rights Act (775 ILCS 5/1-101 et seq.), The Public Works Employment Discrimination Act (775 ILCS 10/1 et seq.), The United States Civil Rights Act of 1964 (as amended) (42 USC 2000a-and 2000H-6), Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (29 USC 794), The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (42 USC 12101 et seq.), and The Age Discrimination Act (42 USC 6101 et seq.).

2. Cost Sharing or Matching.

Cost sharing or matching is not required for this opportunity.

3. Indirect Cost Rate.

In order to charge indirect costs to a grant, the applicant organization must have an annually negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). There are three types of NICRAs:

a) Federally Negotiated Rate. Organizations that receive direct federal funding, may have an indirect cost rate that was negotiated with the Federal Cognizant Agency. Illinois will accept the federally negotiated rate. The organization must provide a copy of the federally NICRA.

b) State Negotiated Rate. The organization may negotiate an indirect cost rate with the State of Illinois if they do not have a Federally Negotiated Rate. If an organization has not previously established an indirect cost rate, an indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted through State of Illinois' centralized indirect cost rate system no later than three months after receipt of a Notice of State Award (NOSA). If an organization previously established an indirect cost rate, the organization must annually submit a new indirect cost proposal through CARS within six to nine months after the close of the grantee's fiscal year, depending on the grantee's audit type requirements.

c) De Minimis Rate. An organization may elect a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct cost (MTDC). Once established, the De Minimis Rate may be used indefinitely. The State of Illinois must verify the calculation of the MTDC annually in order to accept the De Minimis Rate.

All grantees must complete an indirect cost rate negotiation or elect the De Minimis Rate to claim indirect costs. Indirect costs claimed without a negotiated rate or a De Minimis Rate election on record in the State of Illinois' centralized indirect cost rate system may be subject to disallowance.

Grantees have discretion and can elect to waive payment for indirect costs. Grantees that elect to waive payments for indirect costs cannot be reimbursed for indirect costs. The organization must record an election to "Waive Indirect Costs" into the State of Illinois' centralized indirect cost rate system.

The following State University Facilities & Administration Rate and Base will apply to all State issued awards that contain either Federal pass-through funding or State funding.

RATE:

- 20% Rate for awards or programs administered On-Campus*
- 10% Rate for awards or programs administered Off-Campus*

BASE:

Base approved in the State Universities' current Federally Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA)

*Criteria for utilization of the On/Off campus rate is located within the general terms and conditions of Federal NICRA for each State University. If not clearly defined, State awarding agencies and officers will make final determination based upon the purposes of the grant scope.

4. Freedom of Information Act/Confidential Information.

Applications and accompanying materials are subject to disclosure in response to requests received under provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (5 ILCS 140/1 et seq.). Information that could be proprietary, privileged, or confidential commercial or financial information should be clearly identified as such in the application materials. The Department will maintain the confidentiality of that information only to the extent permitted by law.

5. Other, if applicable.

Once an entity is registered, the applicant must complete the Internal Controls Questionnaire (ICQ) through the GATA Grantee Portal. The ICQ assesses the applicant organization's fiscal and administrative risk. Applicants must complete the ICQ annually as part of the pre-award process, and program staff will then determine whether any or all risk-based conditions shall be incorporated into the grant agreement.

Applicants will also be assessed for programmatic risk to determine grant-specific risk. This assessment will be conducted during the application process by the Department. Program staff will then determine whether any or all risk-based conditions shall be incorporated into the grant agreement.

Applicants may submit one application per open region for this opportunity.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package.

Grant application forms are available at the web link provided in the "Grant Application Link" field of this announcement or by contacting the Program Manager:

Diana Fuller
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Springfield, IL 62701
Tele: 217-685-1608
Email: Diana.Fuller@illinois.gov

2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

A standard application package must be submitted to and reviewed by DCEO. Each package must contain the following items:

- ☐ Uniform Grant Application in fillable PDF format. Signature page must be printed, signed, scanned and submitted with application.
- ☐ Uniform Budget utilizing the template provided by DCEO for this project. The entire budget with all worksheets included even if the worksheets are not relevant to the grant

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opportunity must be submitted with the application materials. Signature page must be printed, signed, scanned and submitted with application.

- ☐ Conflict of Interest Disclosure
- ☐ Mandatory Disclosures
- ☐ **TECHNICAL PROPOSAL** (not to exceed 20 pages): Provide a narrative proposal to describe the program activities and outcomes that this grant will support. There should be four sections in your Technical Proposal: (1) Applicant Team Qualifications and Capacity, (2) Documentation of Need, (3) Project Quality and Integrations, and (4) Cost Effectiveness/ Budget. Note that each section of the technical proposal corresponds with the application review criteria in Part E of this NOFO.

Applicant Team Qualifications and Capacity (approx. 4 pages)

- Provide high-level information about the lead applicant organization's size, structure, and history. Specify whether the organization is a start-up or is more established. Describe any other organizations who will be partners or subcontractors or subrecipients for the project.
 - Include a list of the key staff and instructors, including subcontractor personnel, to be assigned to the project. This must align with Attachment 4: Staffing Plan.
 - Describe the role each staff person or instructor will fulfill and indicate the percentage of time they will allot to the Project. Required roles include, but are not limited to:
 - Outreach and recruitment
 - Application and intake
 - Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program delivery (providing wraparound services, student support services, and funds)
 - Clean Energy Jobs training and education
 - Transition services and follow-up
 - Program administration
 - Data entry
 - Provide brief bios of key staff that indicate, at a minimum, positions and total years in the organization, education, relevant work experience, and any program-relevant instructor certifications or plans to acquire certifications.
- Provide information demonstrating the experience and knowledge of the applicant team in:
 - Administering similar grants and projects and providing workforce training programs including clean energy jobs trainings.
 - Providing training, certification preparation, job readiness, and skill development to program participants.
 - Partnering with entities that provide clean energy jobs and training, including businesses, nonprofits, apprenticeship programs, educational institutions, and worker-owned cooperatives to ensure participants have access to employment training, work-based learning opportunities and hiring.
 - Helping participants transition from classroom learning to jobs, especially those in the clean energy sector.
 - Providing barrier reduction supportive services to program participants in a timely and efficient manner. Describe the team's ability to refer participants to other community-based organizations for support services.
- Provide information demonstrating the applicant team's experience with and ability to use an equity lens for program operations. An equity lens is a process that analyzes the impact of policies and practices on marginalized communities to inform and ensure equitable outcomes.
 - Describe the applicant team's experience with and capacity to intentionally and deliberately analyze the delivery and/or impact of the program on participants, including underserved and marginalized groups, such as

persons with barriers due to their lack of education, job training, reliable housing and transportation, criminal history, communities of color (Black, Latino, and Indigenous and Native American persons, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders and other persons of color), members of religious minorities; lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ+) persons; persons with disabilities; persons who live in rural areas; and persons otherwise adversely affected by persistent poverty or inequality.

- Describe the applicant team's experience delivering services to underserved and marginalized groups such as those described above.
 - Describe the applicant team's experience working to assist organizations that provide program services to address barriers to employment, including low educational attainment, prior involvement with the criminal legal system, prior participation in the foster care system, and language barriers.
 - Provide detailed information about members of the applicant team's leadership and/or staff that have lived in the community to be served or their work experience within the community and/or provide real-life situations or success stories showing how their roots within the community have helped guide the organization's work.
- Describe the applicant team's capacity to meet the proposed training program outcomes. (number of students trained, job placement rates, etc.)
 - Describe available facilities, space, and equipment to be used for Program training, operations and administration. Include information about the availability of parking and nearest public transit access.

Documentation of Need (approx. 2 pages)

- Identify the Clean Energy Workforce Hub Area(s) where this project will operate and the specific locations where the training will be offered. The hub areas may include the municipality where the hub is located as well surrounding areas, as applicable (e.g., the Peoria hub may propose to serve applicants in Bloomington-Normal as well). When proposing where to operate, applicants should consider the equity investment eligible communities in the region. Applicants may propose to serve more than one hub area.
- Identify specific equity eligible investment population(s) and communities in the area(s) your program will target. Describe how the social and economic conditions of these populations or communities affect their access to clean-energy jobs training and well-paying clean energy jobs. Describe the barriers that target areas or populations face.
- Describe the clean energy employment needs and targeted occupations in the proposed area(s) and how your program will address these needs through clean jobs training program offerings. Include a brief analysis of how the selection of job-specific training options is informed by labor market information, current local and regional workforce data, and employment trends.
- Describe the existing clean-energy jobs training opportunities in the proposed area(s). If applicable, describe how the work of this project will result in creating or expanding clean-energy job access in areas where clean-energy jobs are not robust or do not exist.
- Describe the expected impact of the project on the identified target populations, communities, and job growth in clean energy jobs and related trades.
- Provide any additional contextual details that will strengthen the reviewers' understanding of the identified issues/problems, needs and expansion opportunities.

Project Quality and Integration (approx. 12 pages)

Provide a three-year plan that describes the design and implementation of all elements of the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Hub Program and Energy Transition Barrier

Reduction Program support services. The plan should, at a minimum, include the following:

- A plan for outreach and recruitment strategies to target populations specifically in equity investment eligible communities, in coordination with Energy Transition Navigators, once they become available.
- The Program design, curriculum, and methods of delivery, including:
 - A summary and description of the Program services to be offered and the overall approach to delivering these services. The summary should include the program duration, numbers of cohorts or classes per year (if applicable), hours per week and delivery methods, including any plans to improve accessibility of instruction (such as online synchronous instruction or open entry/exit models). The narrative should align with Attachment 1: Proposed Work Plan.
 - The goals and anticipated outcomes of the program, including number of participants served, number of certifications achieved, number of individuals who complete the different job-specific training options, numbers of participants employed in clean energy jobs post-graduation or enrolled in other advanced training programs. Provide a brief narrative explaining how these outcomes will be achieved. The narrative should align with Attachment 2: Participant Demographics & Outcomes Summary.
 - A brief description of the training and curricula to be used that aligns with the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework. The narrative must describe how the bridge program will be delivered and propose to offer at least (2) job-specific training options. The narrative should list the nationally recognized certifications or credentials program participants will achieve during training and should align with Attachment 3: Sample Curriculum and Proposed Curriculum. Applicants should provide evidence of employer demand if they propose additional job-specific training options, beyond those described in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework. These additional training options must include industry-recognized credentials.
 - Work-based learning opportunities (minimum of 10% of training hours), as well as plans to provide education around exploration of clean energy career pathways, job search skills, resume development and interview practice.
 - A brief description of any existing training programs or on-the-job training opportunities the program will connect participants to.
 - Student support services focused on academic success and obtaining certifications and credentials, including tutoring, retesting, and makeup sessions, among others.
 - A plan for performance-based stipends, based on attendance and academic performance, not to exceed \$13 per instructional hour.
- A plan to deliver Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program Services, including intake, distribution of funds and services, and referrals. Applicants must explain how they will provide services and funds in a timely and efficient manner to address immediate and longer-term needs.
- Coordination of activities with local and regional workforce, educational, economic development entities, and other CEJA workforce programs. This includes the referral of program participants into partner programs based on the individual employment plan of each participant.
- A plan to create an equitable program culture that incorporates the core values of diversity, inclusion, accessibility, and equity (see definitions above) in all aspects of program delivery. These strategies may include but are not limited to:
 - Equity training for all staff.
 - Marketing and recruitment strategies that reach equity-eligible investment communities and people with barriers to employment.
 - Accessible training locations

- Training delivery that identifies and leverages the strengths of diverse participants.
 - Supportive communication that frames participants as members of the clean energy industry.
 - Partnerships with organizations with ties to diverse participants and equity investment eligible communities.
 - Plans to support, coach and retain participants.
 - Transition services for graduated participants.
- Data tracking, reporting systems, and assessment strategies to track program activities, outcomes and improve program delivery. Describe how you will assess the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Hub Training program and how this information will be used to improve program delivery. Program assessment may include surveys of program graduates regarding overall satisfaction with the training activities delivered and appropriateness to the targeted job opportunities, surveys of employers concerning the comprehensiveness of coverage of required job skills, etc. The assessment plan should indicate how the results of the assessment activities will be used to improve the training program in a continuous manner.

Cost Efficiency/Return on Investment/Budget Narrative (approx. 2 pages)

- Provide a high-level budget narrative for the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Hub Program, including justification of the main budget expense items and an analysis of the cost efficiency in relationship to planned outcomes and proposed activities. Include the overall program cost per eligible participant. Applicants should identify stipend amounts separate from other wrap-around services.
- Provide a high-level budget narrative for how the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction funds will be used to provide wrap-around services in a timely and efficient manner. Include proposed costs per eligible participant.
- Provide information regarding any subcontracts or partner agreements that will be funded under this grant. Include a brief description of the services, the amount and the location that the services will be provided.
- Describe any programs, services and partnerships that will be leveraged to improve the program's cost effectiveness, return on investment and long-term sustainability. Describe any leveraged/matching funds from workforce partners, participating businesses and others.

NOTE: Applicants should submit a budget for the first twelve (12) months of the grant. Additional funds may be provided if the grant is renewed after the first year.

- ☐ **WORKBOOK CONTAINING REQUIRED ATTACHMENTS:** Applicants are required to complete the five attachments that are included as the NOFO Attachments Excel Workbook that is available on the NOFO website. Note that each "tab" of the excel workbook includes a required attachment that should be submitted as one electronic excel file.
- **Attachment 1: Project Summary:** Applicants will complete a project summary by adding information in the bracketed text areas highlighted in red. The project summary will provide an overview of the project partners, program activities and projected outcomes. Please do not edit the non-bracketed text.
- **Attachment 2: Activities and Outcomes:** Applicants must set quarterly and annual goals for program services and outcomes, including numbers of applicants, enrollees, graduates, and job placements.

- **Attachment 3:** Curriculum Plan: Applicants must complete the curriculum plan that includes detail regarding the required Bridge Program and at least 2 job specific training options. Note that the curriculum must align with the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework.
- **Attachment 4:** Staffing Plan: Applicants must outline who will coordinate the administration of the program and provide the program services. NOTE: Resumes, credentials, partnership agreements or Memorandums of Understanding should be compiled and included as one additional PDF attachment.
 - Resumes and Credentials of Program Staff. Include the resumes of key program staff and instructors that demonstrate capacity to complete the work outlined in the application.
 - Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)/Partnership Agreements from any applicant team partners. Include MOUs with all key partners on the Applicant team detailing the entity's information, key staff information, roles and responsibilities associated with this project, and dollar amounts for specific services to be rendered.
 - Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) / Partnership Agreements from employers who agree to consider hiring program graduates and/or offer on-the-job training opportunities or work-based learning opportunities.
- **Attachment 5:** Timeline: Applicants must provide an implementation timeline that outlines the major program activities, staff responsible, date and deliverables.

Application Format Requirements: All applicants must meet the following submission requirements: Applications must be formatted to an 8 ½ x 11-inch page size, using 11-point type and at 100% magnification. Tables may be used to present information with a 10-point type. The program narrative must be typed single-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides. The entire application, including appendices, must be typed single-spaced, with 1-inch margins on all sides. The entire application, including appendices, must be sequentially page numbered (hand-written page numbers are acceptable). Items included in the attachments are NOT included in the page limitations.

Please note there is a maximum upload of 10 documents in the web form that you submit the application, so combining files may be necessary.

3. Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and System for Award Management (SAM).

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

- (i) Be registered in SAM. To establish a SAM registration, go to www.SAM.gov and/or utilize this instructional link: [How to Register in SAM from the www.grants.illinois.gov Resource Links tab](#). SAM.gov registrations must be "public."
- (ii) Provide a valid UEI number in the GATA Grantee Portal registration.
- (iii) Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal or State awarding agency. The Department will not make a Federal pass-through or State award to an applicant until the applicant has complied with all applicable UEI and SAM requirements and, if an applicant has not fully complied with the requirements by the time the Department is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the Department may determine that the applicant is not qualified to receive a Federal pass-through or State award and use that determination as a basis for making a Federal pass-through or State award to another applicant.

4. Submission Dates and Times.

Applications for this opportunity must be submitted by 11:59 p.m.CDT July 14, 2025. If grantees per area are not awarded, this funding opportunity will be open on a rolling basis for the areas not awarded until December 31, 2025. At this time, the Department is only accepting applications in the Carbondale, Kankakee, Danville, and Peoria hub regions.

Applications that are submitted by July 14, 2025 will have the administrative review completed by July 31, 2025 to verify that the application meets the minimum administrative requirements. Applications that do not meet the administrative requirements may have the opportunity to resubmit the application package before the December 31, 2025 deadline for any remaining open regions.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/2e63a95fceb4767b8fa195ee41bb5f5>

The Department is under no obligation to review applications that do not comply with the above requirements. Failure to meet the application deadline may result in the Department returning application without review or may preclude the Department from making the award.

5. Intergovernmental Review, if applicable.

The funding opportunity is not subject to federal Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review."

6. Funding Restrictions.

This opportunity may allow reimbursement of pre-award costs as negotiated by DCEO and the grantee. Other restrictions can be found in Sections A., B., and C.

7. Other Submission Requirements.

Documents stored in Google Docs or other cloud-based servers are not allowed. Applicants may confirm receipt of the application and documents by contacting the program contact listed in this NOFO.

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria.

Grant applications will be reviewed on a competitive basis. Each proposal will be scored on a 100- percentage scale. Applicants must demonstrate that they meet the requirements under this NOFO as described throughout. The following criteria will be used as part of the merit review of applications:

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 investment eligible persons	10%
The quality of applicant's experience and ability to use an equity lens for program operations.	8%

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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%
Documentation of Need (10%)	
The project's focus on specific equity investment eligible communities or populations; identification of barriers that these target communities or populations may face; and workforce needs in target communities.	4%
The project's identification of the clean energy employment needs and targeted occupations in the proposed area(s) and how the applicant will address these needs through clean jobs training program as demonstrated through local and regional labor market information.	3%
Expected impact of project on the identified target communities, populations, and job growth in target trades.	3%
Project Quality and Integration (40%)	
Quality of plan to recruit eligible participants and assist with enrollment.	5%
Quality of training program design, curriculum and methods of delivery. Demonstrated and clear integration of Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework and Bridge Program Curricula in training program design and how these elements support the needs of program participants. Quality and feasibility of program goals and outcomes (including number of students served, industry recognized skills, certifications, and employment)	15%
Quality of plan for delivering Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program Services (wrap-around services) to facilitate access to and completion of training program, including a list of services to be provided.	5%
Quality of plan to help participants transition to employment in the clean energy industry and strength of partnership agreements with employers for job placement and work-based learning opportunities.	5%
Quality of plan to address equity in program design, recruitment, wrap-around supports and transition services.	5%
Quality of plan to track program outcomes, assess the program and use this information to improve program delivery	5%
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%

2. Review and Selection Process.

Applications will be graded using the Merit Review Process and scored on the criteria specified in Section E.1. The Department will designate an Evaluation Committee to grade each application received for this funding opportunity. The final score of each Committee member will be calculated and an average of all scores will be the final applicant score. Grants will be awarded according to the following process: All applications will be sorted by proposed Workforce Hub location. The highest scoring applications in each Workforce Hub location that meet the NOFO requirements will be prioritized for funding. If none of the applications within an open region are recommended for funding, DCEO will accept and review new applications on a first come/first served basis. Where the concentration of program-eligible participants justifies it, DCEO reserves the right to award grants to multiple applicants in a given area. The final grants will be negotiated by the Department based on the applications' alignment with the requirements of this NOFO. The purpose of negotiations will

be to arrive at acceptable grant terms, including budgetary and scope-of-work provisions, at which time the final decision to make a grant award will be made.

The Merit Based Review process is subject to appeal. However, competitive grant appeals are limited to the evaluation process. Evaluation scores may not be protested. Only the evaluation process is subject to appeal. The appeal must be submitted in writing to the Department within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published. The written appeal shall include the name and address of the appealing party, the identification of the grant and a statement of reasons for the appeal. To file an appeal, applicants must submit the appeal in writing and in accordance with the Merit-Based Application Review Appeals Process listed on the Grant Opportunities page of the DCEO website: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/meritappealreview.html>.

3. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates, if applicable.

After the application period is closed, the Department will conduct a merit based review of eligible applications. Successful applicants will receive a Notice of State Award (NOSA) to initiate the grant agreement phase. During this phase, you will be contacted by a grant manager to develop a grant agreement, which can be a months long process depending on complexity, cooperation, and conformity with all applicable federal and state laws.

The Department reserves the right to issue a reduced award, or not to issue any award.

F. Award Administration Information

1. State Award Notices.

The Notice of State Award (NOSA) will specify the funding terms and specific conditions resulting from the pre-award risk assessments and the merit-based review process. The NOSA must be accepted in the GATA Portal by an authorized representative of the grantee organization. The NOSA is not an authorization to begin performance or incur costs.

2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements.

Subrecipients and Subcontractors: Agreement(s) and budget(s) with subrecipients and subcontractors must be pre-approved by and on file with DCEO. Agreements can be submitted to DCEO when available. Subcontractors and subrecipients are subject to all applicable provisions of the Agreement(s) executed between DCEO and the grantee. The successful applicant shall retain sole responsibility for the performance of its subrecipient(s) and/or subcontractor(s).

Grant Uniform Requirements: The Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708/1 *et seq.*) (and its related administrative rules, 44 Ill. Admin. Code Part 7000), was enacted to increase the accountability and transparency in the use of grant funds from whatever source and to reduce administrative burdens on both State agencies and grantees by adopting federal guidance and regulations applicable to those grant funds; specifically, the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (2 CFR 200).

Procurement: Grantees will be required to adhere to methods of procurement per the Procurement Standards (2 CFR 200.317 – 2 CFR 200.327).

3. Reporting.

Periodic Performance Report (PPR) and Periodic Financial Report (PFR)

Grantees funded through this NOFO are required to submit in the format required by the Grantor, at least on a quarterly basis, the PPR and PFR electronically to their assigned grant manager. The first of such reports shall cover the first three months after the award begins. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.328, Periodic Financial Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Pursuant to 2 CFR 200.329, Periodic Performance Reports shall be submitted no later than 30 calendar days following the period covered by the report. Any additional reporting requirements will be disclosed in the NOSA. Grantees are required within 45 calendar days following the end of the period of performance to submit a final closeout report in the format required by the Grantor (See 2 CFR 200.344).

Monitoring

Grantees funded through this NOFO are subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring visits by the Department in accordance with 2 CFR 200.337. They must have an open-door policy allowing periodic visits by Department monitors to evaluate the progress of the project and provide documentation upon request of the monitor. Program staff will also maintain contact with participants and monitor progress and performance of the contracts. The Department may modify grants based on performance.

Audit

Grantees shall be subject to Illinois' statewide Audit Report Review requirements. Terms of the Single Audit Act Amendments of 1996 (31 USC 7501-7507), Subpart F of 2 CFR Part 200, and the audit rules set forth under the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act Admin Rules shall apply (See 44 IL Admin Code 7000.90).

Program Specific Reporting

Grantees shall provide quarterly reports, including program performance metrics by each Hub Site to the Regional Administrator of their Program Delivery Area. Program performance metrics include, but are not limited to:

- a. demographic data, including racial, gender, residency in eligible communities, and geographic distribution data, on Program trainees entering and graduating the Program;
- b. demographic data, including racial, gender, residency in eligible communities, and geographic distribution data, on Program trainees who are placed in employment, including the percentages of trainees by race, gender, and geographic categories in each individual job type or category and whether employment is union, nonunion, or nonunion via temporary agency;
- c. trainee job acquisition and retention statistics, including the duration of employment (start and end dates of hires) by race, gender, and geography;
- d. hourly wages, including hourly overtime pay rate, and benefits of trainees placed into employment by race, gender, and geography;
- e. percentage of jobs by race, gender, and geography held by Program trainees or graduates that are full-time equivalent positions, meaning that the position held is full-time, direct, and permanent based on 2,080 hours worked per year (paid directly by the employer, whose activities, schedule, and manner of work the employer controls, and receives pay and benefits in the same manner as permanent employees); and
- f. qualitative data consisting of open-ended reporting on pertinent issues, including, but not limited to, qualitative descriptions accompanying metrics or identifying key successes and challenges.

Grantees will be required to submit regular reports to document the progress of the project as part of the grant requirements. In addition to the PPR and PFR outlined above, grantees will be required to report real-time program activities and outcomes using a data reporting system as required by the Department. Metrics that are reported are the basis for the performance

payment model and reimbursement used by the Department and outlined under the Performance-Based Payment Model portion of this NOFO

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

Grant Help Desk
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Email: CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov

H. Other Information, if applicable

The Department reserves the right to request additional information from applicants to evaluate applications. Submission of an application confers no right to an award or to a subsequent grant agreement. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is not obligated to award any grants under this program, to pay any costs incurred by the applicant in the preparation and submission of an application or pay any grant-related costs incurred prior to the grant's beginning date.

Questions and Answers: Applicants may submit questions to ceo.ceja@illinois.gov. Answers to questions will be posted at <https://uofi.app.box.com/s/vzbo4oytrq5a83uvian4f7j5owbytuxl>

NOFO Technical Assistance: DCEO will provide Technical Assistance (TA) throughout the application process, in the form of webinars, one-on-one technical assistance sessions, on-line resources and FAQ. For a listing of technical assistance resources please see: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3197-3021.html>

Performance-Based Payment Model: The performance-based payment model utilized by the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program is rooted in the belief that grant funding should be based on a grantee's tangible impact in the community. The Department is driven to produce real change in Illinois which has led the Department, along with many other state agencies, to institute a performance-based payment model in addition to their existing reimbursement model. The combination of performance-based and reimbursement models means that metrics dictate the funds available for reimbursement, but grantees must still submit allowable expenses to access that funding. Performance-based payments will generally be based on four factors that will be negotiated with each grantee based on the details of the project:

- Enrollments (25%)
- Completions (30%)
- Transitions (35%)
- Close-out reports (10%)

If grantees exceed their metrics, they can earn funding beyond their initial grant award. Due to live, real-time reporting, DCEO will make disbursements monthly. Grantees have the right to appeal to the Department if a grantee believes that they missed their outcome metrics and program goals due to variables outside of their control.

Note that the disbursement of Energy Transition Barrier Reduction funds will *not* utilize a performance-based payment model. More information related to the performance-based model will be presented at the bidder's conference.

Renewals and Grant Modifications: The Department may authorize the renewal, for up to two additional years, for projects awarded under this NOFO and additional funding based on the activities, outcomes and performance of the grantee as well as the availability of funds under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act. The renewal, if granted, would occur after one

year of programmatic performance and an evaluation of services and outcomes by the DCEO.

Technical Assistance and Professional Development: Grantees must plan on attending group or individual technical assistance and/or training sessions throughout the year as directed by the Department. Applicants must also budget for instructors' attendance to training and certification classes. In addition to ongoing technical assistance and professional development trainings, grantees may have the opportunity to garner additional support from a program coach contracted by the Department.

Depending on grantee needs and capacity, the Department may require grantees to work with the program coach to support the administration of the grant.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

This checklist outlines the required documents that must be uploaded to the DCEO application Smartsheet at:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/2e63a95fceb4767b8fa195ee41bb5f5>.

Applications that are **submitted by July 14, 2025** will have the administrative review completed by July 31, 2025 to verify that the application meet the minimum administrative requirements. Applications that do not meet the administrative requirements will have the opportunity to resubmit the application package before the December 31, 2025 deadline.

- ☐ Uniform Grant Application in fillable PDF format. Signature page must be printed, signed, scanned and submitted with application. **[PDF FORM]**
- ☐ Uniform Budget utilizing the template provided by DCEO for this project. **[EXCEL FILE and PDF]** *The entire budget with all worksheets included even if the worksheets are not relevant to the grant opportunity must be submitted with the application materials. Signature page must be printed, signed, scanned and submitted with application.*
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Disclosure **[PDF FORM]**
- ☐ Mandatory Disclosures **[PDF FORM]**
- ☐ Technical Proposal **[PDF NARRATIVE]**
- ☐ Workbook containing Required Attachments **[EXCEL FILE]**
 - Attachment 1 – Project Summary
 - Attachment 2 – Activities and Outcomes
 - Attachment 3 – Curriculum Plan
 - Attachment 4 – Staffing Plan
 - Attachment 5 – Timeline
- ☐ Resumes and Job Descriptions **[PDF]**
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding / Partnership Agreements **[PDF]**