

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

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	John Barr (john.w.barr@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY24-1
Funding Opportunity Title	Illinois Returning Residents Clean Jobs Program (CEJA)
CSFA Number	420-30-3361
CSFA Popular Name	CEJA Returning Residents Program
Anticipated Number of Awards	4
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$6,000,000
Award Range	\$1000000 - \$2000000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	No
Indirect Costs Allowed	Yes
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	02/20/2024
Application Date Range	General announcement open for a period of time with no specific due dates for applications.
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... <a href="https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3361-2715.html">https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3361-2715.html</a>
Technical Assistance Session	Offered : Yes Mandatory : No Date : 03/01/2024 : 1:00PM Registration link : <a href="https://illinois.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwsduCtqD0oGtJKM_G5r2uaZFVF_R50eSqH#/registration">https://illinois.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwsduCtqD0oGtJKM_G5r2uaZFVF_R50eSqH#/registration</a>

# Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

## Illinois Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program NOFO ID: 3361-2715

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 launch the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program (“Returning Residents Program” or “Program”). The Returning Residents Program will deliver clean jobs training in Illinois Department of Corrections facilities to individuals within 36 months of their release to prepare them to work in clean energy and related sector jobs upon release. The Program will provide classroom instruction and hands-on learning opportunities, utilizing a standard Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework (<https://uofi.box.com/v/CJCurriculumRR>), connect Program graduates with potential employers in the clean energy industry, and address participant needs.

This Returning Residents Program will be delivered by community-based organizations that will provide administrative guidance, employer outreach, instruction, and participant support services to participants in four correctional facilities: Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center, Decatur Correctional Center, Western Illinois Correctional Center, and Vienna Correctional Center.

#### Program Description

This Notice of Funding Opportunity sets forth the requirements for funding the Returning Residents Program (20 ILCS 730/5-50), as specified by the Energy Transition Act as part of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, P.A. 102-662 (“CEJA”).

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 Returning Residents Program is one of several programs created by CEJA to rectify these historical inequities.

To create a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers prepared for careers in clean energy, the Returning Residents Program creates career training programming at select Illinois Department of Corrections (“IDOC”) facilities. The main objective of the Returning Residents Program is to increase access to and opportunities for education, training, and support services to help returning residents succeed in the labor market, generally, and in the clean energy sector, specifically. Utilizing the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework for Returning Residents, the program will train eligible individuals in the custody of the IDOC who are scheduled to be released within 36 months. Upon completion, participants will be prepared for entry-level clean energy jobs. The Returning Resident Program will fund up to four teams to serve participants in the following four facilities:

1. Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center (men’s facility in Kewanee, IL)
2. Decatur Correctional Center (women’s facility in Decatur, IL)
3. Western Illinois Correctional Center (men’s facility in Mt. Sterling, IL)
4. Vienna Correctional Center (men’s facility in Vienna, IL)

While training will be provided inside these facilities, the Program will continue to provide on-the-ground support to participants after release from custody as they prepare for and transition into employment or to

another training program.

After participants are released, Applicant Teams will provide on-the-ground support services to participants directly or through referrals to other programs. Participants may be released into communities throughout Illinois and in areas that are far away from the correctional facility where they are incarcerated, making it difficult to support all participants after release. Applicant Teams must identify the economic development area region(s) (see map) where they will provide on-the-ground services to participants upon release. These regions include:

- Northeast Region:
  - Cook County
  - Southern suburbs: Will and Kankakee County
  - West/southwest suburbs: DuPage, Kane, Kendall, Grundy, and DeKalb Counties
  - Northern suburbs: Lake and McHenry County
- Northern Stateline Region
- Northwest Region
- West Central Region
- North Central Region
- East Central Region
- Central Region
- Southwest Region
- Southeast Region
- Southern Region



Applicant Teams are not expected to provide services throughout the state, but they are required to propose on-the-ground services in at least one economic development region (or at least one subregion in the Northeast Region), with a preference for those regions where participants are more likely to be released (such as Chicago, Peoria, or East St. Louis). Partnerships with reentry organizations serving these regions are encouraged.

Participants released to areas outside of the team’s proposed service delivery area will be referred to CEJA Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program Hubs (“Workforce Hubs”), Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program Centers (“Climate Works Centers”),<sup>1</sup> and Illinois workNet Centers for services. To facilitate these referrals, Applicant Teams will be expected to coordinate closely with the CEJA Regional Administrators and the grantees of the Workforce Hubs, Climate Works Centers, and Illinois workNet Centers.

This NOFO sets forth requirements for Applicant Teams to deliver the Returning Residents Program inside Illinois Correctional Facilities and to continue to support participants when they are released as they pursue employment in the clean energy industry. The Program includes the following five major components:

1. **Recruitment and intake.** Applicant Teams will coordinate with IDOC to recruit individuals for the program and help them apply. They will work with IDOC to assess the eligibility of participants,

<sup>1</sup> The Workforce Hubs of the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program will be located in or near the following 13 areas: Chicago (southside), Chicago (southwest and west sides), Waukegan, Rockford, Aurora, Joliet, Peoria, Champaign, Danville, Decatur, Carbondale, East St. Louis, and Alton. The Climate Works Centers of the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program will provide trainings in locations in the greater Chicago area, Northern and Central Illinois, and Southern Illinois. Learn more about these programs here: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/ceja-workforce-training.html>

utilizing application and intake procedures developed by the Department to enroll and orient participants to the training program.

2. **Training delivery.** Applicant Teams will provide training, certification preparation, job readiness, and skill development to program participants, utilizing the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework to prepare people for entry-level clean energy jobs. The training, per the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework, consists of a bridge program (essential employability skills and clean energy basics) and job-specific training options.
3. **Supportive services.** Applicant Teams will provide student support services and wrap-around services to mitigate challenges participants may face in completing the training while in custody and in gaining employment upon release from custody. They may provide these services themselves, where feasible, and/or connect participants to a CEJA Workforce Hub, Climate Works Center or Illinois workNet Center for support services upon release.
4. **Transition services and follow-up.** Applicant Teams will provide transition and follow-up services to participants while they are in custody and when they are released to help them find jobs and succeed in the workplace when they are released. Services may include resume and interview preparation, application assistance, job coaching, mentorship, and more. They will track outcomes and identify needs to facilitate job placement and retention. They may provide these services themselves, where feasible, and/or connect participants to a CEJA Workforce Hub, Climate Works Center or Illinois workNet Center for transition services and follow-up upon release.
5. **Employer engagement.** Applicant Teams will engage with employers to identify clean energy job opportunities and work-based learning opportunities for participants and to help facilitate job placement.

Each Applicant Team is required to identify a Program Administrator who will be responsible for delivering the following additional three elements:

1. **Coordination.** The Program Administrator will coordinate with IDOC to recruit participants and administer the program. They will work with other CEJA program grantees and the CEJA Regional Administrators to ensure that the CEJA Programs across the State are consistent and coordinated, and to refer participants to other CEJA programs upon release, as needed.
2. **Program oversight.** The Program Administrator will assist the Department in creating and publishing a guidebook for implementing the Clean Jobs Curriculum in correctional facilities. They will be the IDOC facility liaison and will supervise the Applicant Team's delivery of the program in the correctional facility. They will also oversee transition services for program graduates, helping them attain and retain employment.
3. **Influencing employer behavior.** The Program Administrator will assist the Department in creating and publishing an employer "Hiring Returning Residents" handbook. They will work with potential employers to promote company policies to support hiring and supporting returning residents.

A single organization may propose to provide all the elements or may partner with or subcontract to other entities for the provision of portions of program elements. In this NOFO, "Applicant Team" refers to the main applicant and any subcontractors or partners who will together deliver all elements of the program, including the Program Administrator role.

#### CEJA Coordination

The Returning Residents Program is part of a highly interconnected set of Illinois statewide clean energy workforce and contractor development programming. The Returning Resident Program 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.

Though these programs are not in operation yet, information about each program is available here:

- Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program:

<https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs/clean-jobs-workforce-network-program.html>

- 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>
- 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>
- See also the Frequently Asked Questions (<https://dceo.illinois.gov/climateandequitablejobs/ceja-faq.html>) to learn more about the programs.

#### Alignment with Illinois Workforce Development Priorities

The Returning Residents Program is aligned with Illinois' workforce, education, and economic development priorities. These priorities are described in the *Governor's Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation*.<sup>2</sup> This NOFO will fund projects that support the three Action Areas described in the Action Agenda:

1. Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies
  - a. Identify high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations
  - b. Implement a coordinated workforce development strategy around regional clusters
  - c. Strengthen workforce development in all parts of the state
2. Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next job
  - a. Increase apprenticeship opportunities
  - b. Address barriers to successful training and employment
  - c. Establish and support equity goals
3. Connect job seekers with employers
  - a. Shorten the time from credential to employment
  - b. Use smart online tools to connect job-seekers to valuable information and programs that work
  - c. Integrate workforce services for job seekers
  - d. Give employers easy access to the skilled workforce they need

To meet these workforce development priorities, the Returning Residents Program will be expected to coordinate closely with regional workforce programs, services and initiatives offered through Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs), including the network of Illinois workNet centers.

### **Program Definitions**

This NOFO will use the following definitions.

"Committed person" means a person committed to the Illinois Department of Corrections.

"Commitment" means a judicially determined placement in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections on the basis of a conviction.

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<sup>2</sup> See Executive Order 2019-03 (found at <https://www.illinois.gov/government/executive-orders/executive-order-executive-order-number-3.2019.html>).

"Community-based organization" for this Program means an organization that:

1. provides employment, skill development, or related services to members of the community;
2. includes community colleges, nonprofits, and local governments; and
3. has a history of serving committed persons or justice-involved persons.

"Correctional institution or facility" means an Illinois Department of Corrections building or part of a Department of Corrections building where committed persons are detained in a secure manner.

"Department" means the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

"Discharge" means the end of a sentence or the final termination of a detainee's physical commitment to and confinement in the Illinois Department of Corrections.

"Nonprofit" means a corporation organized under the General Not For Profit Corporation Act of 1986, in good standing to operate in the State of Illinois, that is representative of a community or a significant segment of a community.

"Returning resident" means any United States resident who is:

1. 17 years of age or older,
2. in the physical custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections, and
3. scheduled to be re-entering society within 36 months.

"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, electric 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" include administrative, sales, and other support functions within these industries and other related sector industries.

"Work-based learning," defined in the Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary, 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, 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.

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- Transition 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,” 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 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 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 produces equitable ideas, power, and resources.

### **Program Requirements**

The focus of the Returning Residents Program is to prepare people who are in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections to successfully gain employment in the clean energy industry upon release. The Program requirements are set forth below.

#### **Participant Eligibility**

IDOC shall have sole discretion to determine whether a committed person is eligible to participate in the program and whether a committed person’s participation in the Program poses a safety and security risk for the facility or any person. IDOC will work with the Applicant Team to determine eligibility for program participation, including verifying that individuals meet the following criteria:

- Are age 17 or older;
- Are within 36 months of release;
- Consent in writing to Program participation;
- Are willing to follow all Program requirements;
- Meet program and testing requirements;
- Do not pose safety and security risk, and undergo and pass drug testing (administered by IDOC); and
- Score at least a 6.0 on the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) or the approved Illinois Community College Board assessment for determining basic skills deficiency.

Potential participants will apply through a simple application and testing process.

#### **Training Locations**

Applicant Teams may propose to deliver the training program at one or more of the following IDOC facilities: Decatur Correctional Center, Vienna Correctional Center, Western Illinois Correctional Center, and Kewanee Life Skills Re-entry Center. Each of the facilities has designated classroom/lab spaces for this program that are large enough to accommodate space requirements of the curriculum. Classrooms will be equipped with tables and chairs. Applicant Teams must supply all other training equipment and tools. If Applicant Teams wish to store equipment and tools on-site, the sites have cages, tool rooms, or crib closets that can be secured. Hands-on training activities may require additional space, which can be provided outside on the correctional center grounds or in mobile training labs. Room descriptions are below:

1. Decatur Correctional Facility (women’s facility): Classroom is approximately 30’ by 30’ with a 15’ by 22’ cage in the room. An adjacent room is also available and is 30’ by 18’.

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2. Vienna Correctional Facility: Room 128 is 38' by 54' with a crib closet that is 7' by 7'. The space has been used for barber training. It has tables along the perimeter of the room and sinks. Alternatively, room 120 is 38' by 26' with tool cribs and closets inside the room. One tool crib is 12.5' by 8' and another is 9.5' by 8'.
3. Western Illinois Correction Facility: The large lab room is 66' by 48', with a tool room that is 15' by 13' and an office that is 6' by 8'. The space has been used for auto mechanic training. Small desks and large tables are available. Alternatively, a vocational room is available that is 30' by 37' with a 6' by 8' closet. The room has small desks and a few large tables.
4. Kewanee Life Skills Re-entry Center: Two side-by-side rooms are available and have dimensions of 28' by 15'. One room can be set up and used as a lab, and the other room (which is right next to it) can be used as a classroom. The lab space will be a CEJA-designated space, but the classroom may be shared with other training programs.

Applicant Teams are required to deliver all instruction in person (no remote learning) and must have at least one instructor in the classroom/lab at all times. The training shall be delivered to a cohort of no more than 15 students who will meet 7-8 hours, 5 days a week in the designated classroom/lab spaces. Grantees will coordinate with site administrators to determine what times of the day training can be offered. In general, the spaces may be used between 7:30am and 3:30pm, with the possibility of evening or weekend classes at some facilities. Instruction times may be limited by security availability and movement issues.

### Training Program Requirements

The Returning Residents Program will prepare participants to succeed in the labor market, generally and in the clean energy sector, specifically, through the delivery of a standard Clean Jobs Curriculum. Curriculum must follow the requirements outlined in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework for Returning Residents ("Curriculum Framework," <https://uofi.box.com/v/CJCurriculumRR>). Per the Curriculum Framework, Applicant Teams will provide a Bridge program and a job-specific training option (solar or HVAC training), described below.

**Bridge program.** For the bridge program, the grantees will utilize the Curriculum Framework, which includes the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework (see <https://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/illinois-essential-employability-skills-framework>). The bridge program is a portion of the overall Curriculum Framework that provides training in essential employability skills and clean energy basics to help participants succeed in an array of workplaces and clean energy jobs. The bridge program will lead students to obtain, at a minimum, an OSHA-10 certification and a First Aid/CPR certification.

**Job-specific training.** After participants complete the bridge program, they will continue to the job-specific training portion of the curriculum. Applicant teams may offer Solar Photovoltaic training or HVAC training, with an energy efficiency focus. Applicants may also propose a different job-specific training option for high-demand clean energy jobs in Illinois. Applicants who propose a different job-specific training option must ensure that the training meets the criteria found on page 29 of the Clean Jobs Curriculum for Returning Residents. Job-specific training should include hands-on learning activities and work-based learning elements, where possible, to allow participants to put into practice what they have learned in the classroom. Work-based learning elements may include training in simulated or mock workplace settings or career awareness and exploration activities.

### Supportive Services

Supportive services, as shown in Table 1 below, are intended to help individuals overcome financial and other barriers to participate in and complete the Returning Residents Program and successfully gain employment in the clean energy industry upon release. They include wrap-around support services, student support services, and transition/career support services. Examples of supportive services are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Supportive Services for Participants



Types of Wrap-around Support Services (including but not limited to)	Types of Student Support Services (including but not limited to)	Types of Transition/Career Services (including but not limited to)
Referrals for healthcare, substance use treatment, housing, etc.	Tutoring (especially in math)	Mentoring/coaching
Vital document preparation (SSN, ID, Driver's license, etc.)	Make-up classes	Job exploration, job search and job placement services
Transportation and childcare costs	Retesting	Resume writing and mock interviews
Emergency bill payments	Educational enrichment	Job fair (at least one per program cycle)
Expungement and other legal supports	Course packets (to continue learning during lockdowns)	Follow-up support at least one year after job placement

**Supportive Services for Participants Inside Correctional Facilities.** Applicant Teams are required to provide *student support services* to enable participants to successfully complete the training. Supports include tutoring, digital literacy training, make-up classes, and retesting. They are also required to provide *transition/career support services* including resume writing, mock interviews, and career exploration activities. As participants' release dates approach, Applicant Teams should encourage participants to participate in IDOC pre-release procedures, which include signing up for Medicaid, health exams, getting documents, and finding transitional housing. They will conduct a needs assessment to identify *wrap-around supports* that will be needed upon release and help facilitate referrals.

**Supportive Services for Participants after Release.** Where feasible, Applicant Teams will provide supportive services to assist participants in attaining and retaining employment following release. Support may include *transition/career support services*, such as job application assistance, mentoring, job and financial coaching, follow-up services, and more. Where feasible, Applicant Teams should provide *wrap-around support services and student support services* using Program funds to participants to reduce barriers to employment.

Applicant Teams must identify the geographic area where they will provide on-the-ground supportive services to participants after they are released from custody. Note that teams are not expected to have a state-wide reach, but they should propose to provide on-the-ground supportive services in at least one economic development region in Illinois or subregion in the Northeastern Illinois region (see map on page 2), with a preference for those regions where participants are more likely to be released (such as Chicago, Peoria, or East St. Louis). Partnerships with reentry organizations in these regions are encouraged.

Participants who are released into areas that the Applicant Team does not serve should be referred to the nearest Workforce Hub, Climate Works Center, or Illinois workNet Center for on-the-ground supportive services and follow-up. If participants are unable to complete the entire training program before release (for instance, they only completed the bridge program), they should be referred to the nearest Workforce Hub to complete their training. A warm handoff and close coordination between grantees will be required. Referrals to other community-based organizations that serve returning residents are also encouraged.

Discharge Scenarios

Applicant Teams should plan to provide continual services in the following participant discharge scenarios.

1. Participants may be discharged sooner than expected and need additional training support after release.
2. Because people are eligible to participate 36 months before their release date, participants may complete training a long time ahead of their release.

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3. Participants may be released to communities far from the correctional facility and the Applicant Team's service delivery area.
4. Participants may not know where they will be released until shortly before their outdate.

In all discharge scenarios, the Applicant Team should consider how their program will coordinate with IDOC for information and how they will provide training and supportive services or refer participants to other programs for training and supportive services.

### Program Elements

Applicant Teams must indicate how they will deliver the following program elements:

1. **PROGRAM ENTRY:** Applicant Teams will use the provided applications and assessments to assist candidates in entering the program. Intake will include a simple application and an interview and coaching session. They will ensure that candidates have scored 6.0 or above on the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) or the approved Illinois Community College Board assessment for determining basic skills deficiency. The program will follow IDOC's policies regarding retesting. They will refer students who do not meet minimum program requirements to other educational services in their facilities, such as literacy, GED, and ESL classes. Applicant Teams will provide a one-week pre-program orientation to ensure that candidates understand and are interested in continuing the program. Candidates that successfully complete the orientation may continue to the full Program.
2. **TRAINING PROGRAM DELIVERY.** Applicant Teams must deliver the Clean Jobs Curriculum, as outlined in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework for Returning Residents, including the bridge program and a job-specific training component. The entity providing the Program training must be approved to provide training services by all appropriate accrediting bodies, including, but not limited to, the Illinois Board of Higher Education pursuant to the Private Business and Vocational Schools Act of 2012 (105 ILCS 426), if applicable. Program delivery methods should be flexible and interactive 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. Personalized training to ensure that each participant is empowered to succeed;
  - b. Hands-on, interactive learning opportunities, such as those at simulated job sites;
  - c. Contextualized learning to demonstrate how the skills they are learning are relevant to a real-world job site;
  - d. Printed packets that can be completed on-demand when participants are in lockdown at correctional facilities;
  - e. Alternative testing approaches to demonstrate material mastery; and
  - f. Scenario or role-playing approaches (particularly for essential employability skills components).
3. **STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES:** Applicant Teams shall provide student support services to assist participants in maximizing training program success and obtaining the program's certifications/credentials. Allowable program costs may include one-on-one tutoring services, translation services, mentorships, retesting, make-up sessions, and other educational enrichment (See Table 1). Applicants may consider providing math tutoring or group math and reading classes to boost math or reading skills.
4. **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT:** Applicant Teams must indicate how they will engage with clean energy employers to facilitate job placement for participants. Competitive applications will demonstrate existing relationships with clean energy employers through Letters of Support or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs). Employer engagement activities shall include:
  - a. Communicating regularly with employers about hiring needs, program graduates who will soon be released, and other program engagement opportunities;
  - b. Regular contact with employers after they hire program graduates to discuss barriers to success and the need for follow-up services and support.
5. **TRANSITION SERVICES:** Applicant Teams will assist participants in transitioning to clean energy jobs or advanced training opportunities by providing transition services while participants are still incarcerated and after release. Transition services may include, but are not limited to, a career assessment, the creation of an individualized career plan, mock interviews, application preparation,

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resume writing, job search and placement services, and job application assistance (see Table 1). Applicant Teams may offer transition services themselves and/or refer participants to the nearest Workforce Hub or Climate Works Center for transition services. They may also refer participants to an Illinois WorkNet Center (American Job Center) for services.

6. **WRAP-AROUND SUPPORT SERVICES.** Applicant Teams should assess participants' need for wrap-around services to meet their basic needs as their release date approaches and encourage participants to participate in IDOC pre-release processes. IDOC pre-release processes include support to get vital documents and state IDs, enrollment in Medicaid, health examinations, and assistance connecting to transitional housing and other supports. Wrap-around services should be available to participants who continue to receive Program services *after* being released. Grantees may propose to provide these wrap-around support services after release using Returning Resident Program funds or may refer participants to Workforce Hubs, Climate Works Centers, Illinois workNet Centers, or other organizations after release for these services.
7. **EQUITY-FOCUSED PROGRAM CULTURE:** Applicant Teams must describe how the core equity values defined on page 5 will infuse all elements of their program delivery. An equity-focused program culture should include, at a minimum:
  - a. Involving justice-impacted individuals in shaping the design and delivery of the proposed program;
  - b. Creating a welcoming, inclusive environment within a correctional setting;
  - c. Empowering participants to succeed by identifying and leveraging their strengths;
  - d. Creating a sense of belonging for returning residents in the clean energy industry;
  - e. Making sure that training and support services are accessible and equitably delivered;
  - f. Addressing barriers to completing the training and attaining/retaining employment; and
  - g. Providing staff training and professional development to increase cultural competency.
8. **FOLLOW-UP SERVICES:** The Program will continue to provide follow-up services to participants while they seek employment and after they attain employment to support retention. Applicant Teams will provide these services for participants themselves or refer participants to Workforce Hubs, Climate Works Centers, or Illinois workNet Centers to ensure that all participants receive active follow-up services for at least one year following release. Follow-up will include identifying support service needs and tracking outcomes related to attaining and retaining employment. Follow-up services may also include job coaching and financial coaching, employer contact and intervention, peer support groups, mentorship, career advancement services, and referrals for assistance with opening a business. Long-term follow-up will continue for at least 3-5 years to track program outcomes. Grantees will be expected to provide this long-term follow-up for the duration of their grant period; follow-up after the grant period may be provided by the Department or future grantees that are selected.
9. **COORDINATION.** Applicant Teams will coordinate closely with the organizations delivering the Workforce Hubs, Climate Works Centers, or American Job Centers to ensure a warm handoff and address any barriers that participants might face. Applicants should proactively work with the CEJA Regional Administrators and the grantees of the Workforce Hubs, Climate Works Centers, and Illinois WorkNet Centers to coordinate the transition by sharing any documentation of program participation/completion and skills assessments, providing case notes as appropriate about support that may be needed, and assisting with identifying the appropriate next step in an individual's career path.
10. **DATA TRACKING AND EVALUATION:** Applicant Teams shall track participant data, including demographics of enrolled participants. Applicant Teams shall work with Workforce Hubs, Climate Works Centers, Illinois workNet Centers, and IDOC to collect data to track performance metrics (see Performance Goals and Measures below). Applicant Teams will perform data tracking and use reporting systems as directed by the Department. The Applicant Teams should describe how they will use this data to evaluate the program and engage in continuous improvement. Applicant Teams will also be required to cooperate with external evaluation efforts, as directed by DCEO.

### PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR ELEMENTS

Applicant Teams will identify a Program Administer who will deliver the following additional elements:

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1. **RECRUITMENT:** Program Administrators shall coordinate with IDOC personnel at the facilities where training is offered to ensure that potential participants understand the benefits of the Program and how to enroll. Marketing and outreach should help eligible persons make informed decisions about Program participation. While eligible participants include those within 36 months of release, Program Administrators should work with IDOC wardens and superintendents to prioritize training for people with shorter release timeframes, if possible, so that the training remains relevant and timely upon their release. Delays in the training program shall not cause delays in discharge.
2. **COORDINATION:** Program Administrators shall coordinate with IDOC personnel to ensure that the program meets in-facility requirements and that the training is offered in conjunction with other discharge procedures and movements. They will coordinate with the CEJA Regional Administrators, the Workforce Hubs, the Climate Works Centers, and Illinois workNet Centers to ensure that execution, performance, partnerships, marketing, and Program access across the State are consistent while respecting regional differences. Regular coordination will be required to monitor delivery and performance outcomes, investigate points of concern, and work together to address them.
3. **TRAINING GUIDANCE AND OVERSIGHT:** Program Administrators will support DCEO in creating a guidebook for implementing the training program in correctional settings and provide information on all necessary and useful resources for Program participants and graduates. They will oversee the delivery of the training program in the correctional facility.
4. **TRANSITION AND FOLLOW-UP SERVICES OVERSIGHT:** Program Administrators will work with the Applicant Team to ensure that Program graduates receive transition and follow-up services, including job coaching and financial coaching, to support job placement and employment longevity.
5. **EMPLOYER HANDBOOK INPUT:** Program Administrators will collaborate with the Department to create and publish a "Hiring Returning Residents" handbook for employers that includes benefits and expectations of hiring returning residents, guidance on how to recruit, hire, and retain returning residents, guidance on how to access State and federal tax credits and incentives and State and federal resources, guidance on how to update company policies to support hiring and supporting returning residents, and an understanding of the harm in one-size-fits-all policies toward returning residents.
6. **EMPLOYER ENGAGEMENT:** Program Administrators will work with the Applicant Team to engage with potential employers. Their focus will be to 1) promote company policies to support hiring and supporting returning residents; and 2) facilitate job placement. Examples of engagement activities include:
  - a. Training events and forums to address employer issues such as liability, coverage, and insurance, bonding, training, hiring practices, and retention support.
  - b. Networking events for employers to support each other around hiring and supporting returning residents.
  - c. Job placement discussions with clean energy employers.
  - d. Partnerships with Illinois solar energy businesses and trade associations to identify solar employers that support and hire returning residents.
  - e. Coordination with the Department, CEJA Regional Administrators and the Energy Workforce Advisory Council (20 ILCS 730/5-65).
  - f. Organizing at least one job fair inside each correctional facility.

To fully implement all program elements outlined above, applicants must outline how the key program areas will be staffed to ensure the quality delivery of programs and services. Where appropriate, applicants may enter into agreements with other organizations that can provide the program elements described above. Evidence of partnerships should be demonstrated in memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and through line items in applicants' proposed budgets.

### Program History

N/A

### Performance Goals and Measures

Applicants should set performance goals based on the following outcome measures:

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- a. The number of returning residents who enroll in the Program;
- b. The number of returning residents who complete the Program;
- c. The total number of individuals discharged;
- d. The demographics of each entering and graduating class;
- e. The percentage of graduates employed at 6 and 12 months after release;
- f. The recidivism rate of graduates at 3 and 5 years after release;
- g. Program graduates' interview and hiring status;
- h. Graduates' employment status, such as hire date, pay rates, whether full-time, part-time, or seasonal, and separation date; and
- i. Continuing education and certifications gained by Program graduates.

Program Administrators will perform data tracking and use reporting systems as directed by the Department to track progress towards performance goals. Data will be disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, age, and location. Program Administrators should describe how they will use this data to evaluate the program and engage in continuous improvement.

### Other Information

N/A

## B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing state funds appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly under Public Act 103-0006). Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is \$6,000,000. Awards will range from \$1,000,000 to \$2,000,000. The Department expects to make 4 awards (one at each designated correctional facility) through this NOFO.

Anticipated start date for awards is June 1, 2024. The period of performance is expected to be 12 months. The Department intends to offer up to two (2) twelve (12) month renewals for each award based on the performance of the grantee. Additional funds of up to \$6,000,000 may be available for each of the twelve month renewal periods.

Applicants are encouraged to propose a per participant cost not to exceed \$25,000 for all services provided. Applicants that wish to apply to deliver programming at more than one correctional facility must submit multiple applications (one application per facility).

**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.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/business\\_services/corp.html](https://www.cyberdriveillinois.com/departments/business_services/corp.html));
- Is not on the Illinois Stop Payment list (verified once entity is registered in GATA Grantee Portal); and

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- 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:

Community-based organizations, defined as organizations that:

- Provide employment, skill development, or related services to members of the community.
- Include community colleges, nonprofits, and local governments.
- Have a history of serving committed persons or justice involved persons.

A single organization may apply to deliver all program elements, including Program Administrator and Training Provider elements, or they may partner with or subcontract with other organizations to deliver key elements, including but not limited to business engagement, application and intake, instruction delivery, support services, data management, and more. However, the lead applicant must meet the definition of "community-based organization" as set forth above.

Applicant Teams are encouraged to include organizations that can deliver training within the designated correctional facilities as well as organizations that can provide on-the-ground supportive services to participants who are released into communities throughout Illinois. Consider partnerships with organizations that serve areas of the state where participants are more likely to be released (such as Chicago, Peoria, or East St. Louis).

The Program Administrator identified for each Applicant Team must have:

- Strong capabilities, experience, and knowledge related to program development and financial management;
- Cultural and language competency needed to be effective in the communities to be served;
- Knowledge and experience working with committed persons or justice-involved persons;
- Knowledge and experience in working with providers of clean energy jobs; and
- Awareness of clean energy and related sector trends and activities, workforce development best practices, regional workforce development needs, and community development.

A Department of Corrections background check is required prior to being approved to deliver Program elements for the following program staff:

- The Program Administrator;
- All instructors or staff who will have regular interactions with committed persons or regular access to a Department of Corrections facility;
- All staff who will regularly access a committed person's personal identifying information or other data elements.

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IDOC Wardens or Superintendents shall have the authority to deny a Program instructor or staff member entry into an institution or facility for safety and security concerns or failure to follow all facility procedures or protocols. A Program instructor or staff member administering the Program may be terminated or have his or her contract canceled if the Program instructor or staff member is denied entry into an institution or facility for safety or security concerns.

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 in 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 10% 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.

State Universities may request an indirect cost rate of 10% due to the State of Illinois' continuous funding of a portion of facility and administrative costs.

### **4. Other, if applicable.**

Once an entity is registered, the applicant must complete a programmatic, fiscal, and

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administrative risk assessment prior to award. Applicants will 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 Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Program staff will then determine whether any or all risk-based conditions shall be incorporated into the grant agreement.

Applicants may submit multiple applications 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:

Maureen Grosenheider  
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity  
555 W Monroe  
Chicago, IL 60661  
Email: [maureen.grosenheider@illinois.gov](mailto:maureen.grosenheider@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 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

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also requires the submission of the following program specific documents:

- ATTACHMENT A: Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program Application.** The required application template includes the following:
  - a. Application Team Description, Experience, and Qualifications
    - The correctional facility where you are proposing to deliver the training program and the proposed economic development region(s) for post-release services.
    - Description of the organizations in the applicant team and role in the project.
    - Applicant's history working with incarcerated individuals and/or justice impacted individuals and with organizations serving these individuals.
    - Applicant team's experience providing workforce training, certification, job readiness, skill development, and supportive services



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- Applicant team's knowledge and experience engaging employers and helping people, especially returning residents, gain and retain employment.
  - Applicant team's knowledge and experience within the clean energy industry.
  - Staffing plan, including identification of a Program Administrator and key staff members responsible for delivering program elements. If new hires will be required, provide a job description for that position.
- b. Documentation of Need
- Description of how the proposed program will address barriers that returning residents may face inside correctional facilities that impact their ability to complete the program.
  - Description of how the proposed program will address barriers that returning residents face upon release.
  - Description of how the proposed program will address employers' challenges or concerns related to hiring and retaining returning residents.
  - Description of the expected impact of the project on returning residents and communities impacted by incarceration.
- c. Project Plan
- Logistics of training program during year 1, including duration of the training, number of cohorts or classes per year, number of participants per cohort, and hours per week.
  - Description of how the team will coordinate with IDOC to recruit participants and assist participants in entering the program.
  - Description of how the team will provide student support services to help participants complete the training.
  - Description of how your team will facilitate job placement and influence employer hiring and retention practices through employer engagement activities.
  - Description of how the team will provide follow-up services and retention support to participants.
  - Description of how the team will support participants in gaining employment through transition services.
  - Description of how the team will provide follow-up services and retention support to participants.
  - Description of how the team will coordinate with other CEJA grantees, once they are selected, to support participants after release, across the different participant discharge scenarios.
  - Description of how the team will utilize the classroom/lab spaces provided by IDOC to deliver the training curriculum.
  - Description of the plan for creating an equity-focused program culture by:
    - Involving justice-impacted individuals in shaping the design and delivery of the proposed program.
    - Creating a welcoming and inclusive learning environment within a correctional setting.
    - Empowering participants to succeed.
    - Creating a sense of belonging for returning residents in the clean energy industry.
    - Making training and support services accessible and equitable.
    - Addressing barriers to completing training and attaining employment.
    - Providing staff training and professional development to increase cultural competency.
  - Description of how the team will collect program outcome data using the data reporting systems provided and assess program performance. Description of how this information will be used to improve the program in a continuous manner.

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- Anticipated outcomes in terms of participants enrolled and participant completions by month 6, month 9, and month 12.
  - Milestones/deliverables timeline for year one.
  - Bridge program curriculum plan detailing how the team will deliver the bridge program elements described in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework.
  - Job specific training curriculum plan detailing how the team will deliver the job-specific training elements described in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework.
- d. Budget Narrative
- Narrative documenting, for the main applicant, the main budget expense items, how costs were calculated, and why costs are necessary and reasonable to achieve program outcomes.
  - Narrative documenting the main budget expense items for each partner or subcontractor receiving funding to deliver program elements.
  - Narrative justifying the cost effectiveness of the budget expense items in relationship to planned outcomes and proposed activities.
- e. Supplementary attachments:
- Resumes of Program Administrator and any key staff assigned to the project, including any partner or subcontractor staff, or job descriptions for new hires (in one combined pdf).
  - Budget or staffing information for any additional partners not described above.
  - Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) from all partners and subcontractors who are part of the applicant team and who will be receiving funding to deliver program elements. Please utilize the provided template and combine all MOUs into one pdf.
  - Letters of Support from clean energy employers or other organizations that have expressed a willingness to work with your team to support the project. Please utilize the provided template and combine all letters into one pdf.

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](http://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.

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## 4. Submission Dates and Times.

Applications for this opportunity must be submitted by on a rolling basis until grants are awarded in each of the correctional facilities identified in this NOFO. Applications that are received by April 15, 2024 will be included in the first merit review of applications.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/f5cf9b349d92449fa5d2bae42d66b309>

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.

N/A

## 6. Funding Restrictions.

This opportunity does not allow reimbursement of pre-award costs. Other restrictions can be found in Sections B. and C.3.

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

Table 1: Returning Residents Program Merit Review Criteria

Applicant Team Qualifications and Capacity (35%)	
Applicant team's history working with incarcerated people and/or justice-impacted people.	6%
Applicant team's related experience providing workforce training, certification, job readiness, and skill development to people, especially justice-impacted people.	6%
Applicant team's experience providing transition and follow-up services to help people (especially returning residents) gain and retain jobs.	6%
Applicant team's knowledge and experience within the clean energy industry, including relationships with clean energy employers and qualifications to teach the Clean Jobs Curriculum.	5%
Applicant team's capacity to provide program elements in the correctional facility and in identified economic development region(s) as evidence through staffing plan.	6%
Program Administrator's capabilities and experience related to program development, financial management, cultural and language competency, working with committed	6%

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and justice-involved persons, working with clean energy employers, awareness of clean energy trends, and workforce development best practices.	
<b>Documentation of Need (10%)</b>	
Quality of plan to address barriers that returning residents face inside correctional facilities and upon release.	4%
Quality of plan to address the challenges and concerns that employers face when hiring returning residents.	3%
The expected impact of the project on returning residents and communities impacted by incarceration.	3%
<b>Project Quality and Integration (40%)</b>	
Quality and feasibility of plan to provide recruitment, intake, and enrollment services.	5%
Quality of plan to deliver training, with clear integration of Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework, including the Bridge Program and job-specific training.	8%
Quality of plan to provide supportive services (student support services, transition services, and wrap-around support services) to participants before and after release, in coordination with CEJA Workforce Hubs, Climate Works Centers and CEJA regional administrators.	8%
Quality of plan to help participants transition to employment in the clean energy industry and provide credible, relevant partnership agreements with employers for job placement and work-based learning opportunities	7%
Quality of plan to integrate equity in all aspects of program design and delivery, including recruitment, support services, training, and transition services.	7%
Quality of plan to track program outcomes, assess the program use this information to improve program delivery.	5%
<b>Cost Effectiveness/Return on Investment (15%)</b>	
The thoroughness, reasonableness, and necessity of applicant team's proposed program costs, in relation to planned activities and projected outcomes.	10%
The applicant team's ability to leverage existing programs, services, and partnerships to improve cost effectiveness, return on investment, and long-term sustainability of the 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 correctional facility location. The highest scoring applications for each location that meet the NOFO requirements will be prioritized for funding. 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/meritappreview.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**

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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 shall apply (See 30 ILCS 708/65(c)).

### **Program Specific Reporting**

Grantees shall provide quarterly reports, including program performance metrics disaggregated by race, ethnicity, gender, and age at each correctional facility to the Regional Administrator of their Program Delivery Area. Program performance metrics include, but are not limited to:

- The number of returning residents who enroll in the Program;
- The number of returning residents who were accepted for enrollment in the Program;
- The number of returning residents who applied for and were denied enrollment in the Program;
- The demographics of each entering and graduating class;
- The number of returning residents who complete the Program;
- The number of returning residents who did not complete the Program;
- The total number of individuals discharged;
- The number of returning residents who enrolled in the Program and were removed;
- The percentage of graduates employed at 6 and 12 months after release;
- The recidivism rate of Program graduates; The candidates interviewed and hiring status;
- The graduate employment status, such as hire date, pay rates, whether full-time, part-time, or seasonal, and separation date;
- The number of returning residents who graduated from the Program and remained employed in the clean energy industry within one year and 3 years after release;
- The number of returning residents who graduated from the Program and changed employment in the clean energy industry within one year and 3 years after release;
- The number of returning residents who graduated from the Program and separated from employment in the clean energy industry and received employment in another industry within one year and 3 years after release; and
- Continuing education and certifications gained by Program graduates.

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.

## **G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)**

Grant Help Desk  
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity  
Email: [CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov)

## **H. Other Information, if applicable**

## NOFO ID: 3361-2715

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.

**Freedom of Information Act/Confidential Information:** Applications 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 reasonably be considered to be proprietary, privileged, or confidential commercial or financial information should be identified as such in the application. The Department will maintain the confidentiality of that information only to the extent permitted by law.

**Questions and Answers:** Applicants may submit questions by emailing [ceo.ceja@illinois.gov](mailto:ceo.ceja@illinois.gov). Answers will be posted on the NOFO page (<https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3361-2715.html>).

**NOFO Technical Assistance:** DCEO will provide Technical Assistance (TA) throughout the application period in the form of webinars and one-on-one technical assistance sessions.

- Bidder's Conference, GATA Requirements and Budgets: March 1, 2024, at 1 pm
  - [https://illinois.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwsduCtqD0oGtJKM\\_G5r2uaZFVF\\_R50eSgH#/registration](https://illinois.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZwsduCtqD0oGtJKM_G5r2uaZFVF_R50eSgH#/registration)
- Writing an Effective Proposal: March 8, 2024, at 1 pm
  - <https://illinois.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYvf--srT0oGdakoMvASSFYoMvCxxHaFwlr#/registration>
- Applicants may sign up for one-on-one technical assistance with a CEJA NOFO coach here: <https://forms.office.com/r/4qUkTdgCFY>
- Additional regional networking events will be coordinated by the Department – Please check the program website for more details.

**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's Energy Transition Assistance Fund. The renewal, if granted, would occur after one year of programmatic performance and an evaluation of services and outcomes by 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.

**Intent to Apply:** If you intend to apply for this grant opportunity please email your organizations information by March 31, 2024 to: [maureen.grosenheider@illinois.gov](mailto:maureen.grosenheider@illinois.gov). DCEO will use this information to support applicants better and prepare for the review and award process. Providing this notice of intent is not required to apply and does not improve any organization's chances of receiving an award.

*Name of Main Applicant (Organization name)*

*Contact Name (First and last name of primary contact individual for the organization)*

*Contact E-mail*

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*Name of any partner or subrecipient Organizations*

*The correctional facility where training will be delivered:*

- Kewanee Life Skills Reentry Center (men's facility in Kewanee, IL)*
- Western Illinois Correctional Center (men's facility in East Moline, IL)*
- Decatur Correctional Center (women's facility in Decatur, IL)*
- Vienna Correctional Center (men's Vienna, IL)*