Clean Building Navigator Community Partnership Briefing

Wednesday, November 18, 2026

Illinois DCEO Office of Energy & Business Utility

NIU Workforce Policy Lab

Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

Who is hosting today

Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF ENERGY & BUSINESS UTILITY
JB Pritzker, Governor

Funds and oversees the program.

WORKFORCE
POLICY LAB

Designs the program and supports partners.

How to take part today

Say hello: type your name and organization in the chat.

Type questions in the chat at any time.

Polls will pop up on your screen. Answer there.

This session is recorded.

Materials posted after both sessions.

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This is an informational session

- It is not an applicant session.
- Attending creates no obligation to partner with any applicant.
- Questions about NOFO details will be provided in a public FAQ once the NOFO has been published.

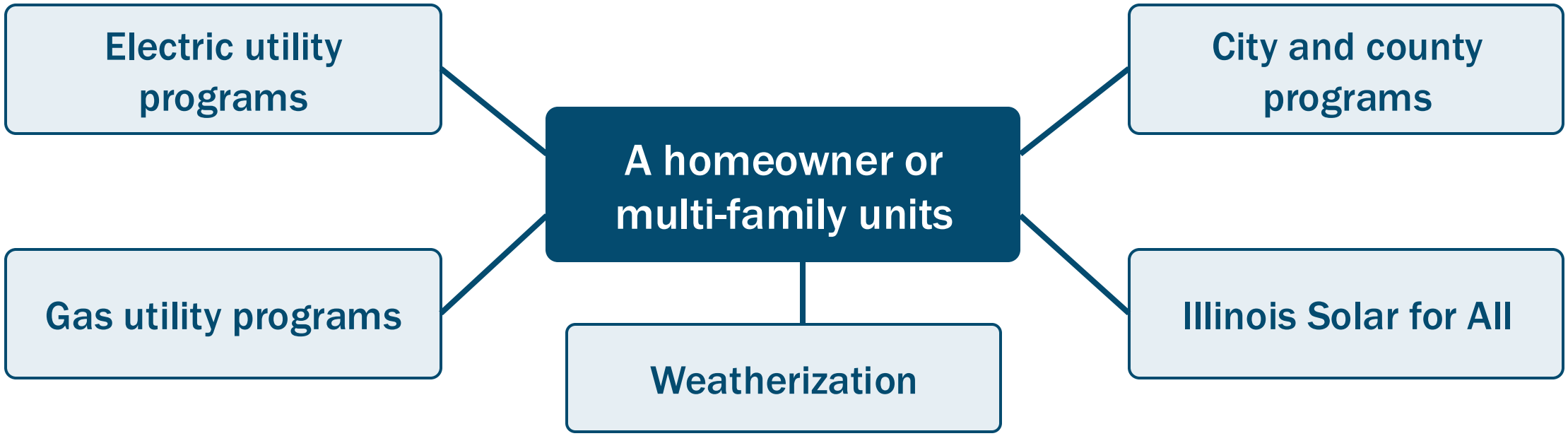
Today's agenda

1. Welcome
2. Why Is This Program Needed?
3. Clean Building Navigator Program Design
4. Funding Opportunity Preview & How to Get Involved
5. Questions & Next Steps

2 Why Is This Program Needed?

Helps to find what exists.

Each program has its own rules, forms and timelines. Which lead to burdens on residents.



Barriers to accessing help

Currently, residents must go here, here and here to understand all the programs and timelines.

Time	What's needed, Researching Resources: Contractors & Money, Applications
Language	Info isn’t always in plain words or other languages.
Coordination	Programs at every level don’t line up.
Workforce	Not enough qualified contractors.

3 Clean Building Navigator Program Design

Navigator Program Goals

- More Illinois residents use existing energy efficiency and renewable energy programs and incentives.
- To cut greenhouse gas emissions from buildings.
- Advancing the clean energy transition in Illinois

Six communities, two regions



Northern Region

Chicago (South, Southwest and West Sides), Rockford, Waukegan

Central/Southern Region

Alton, Danville, Decatur

Your input shaped this program

41
RFI respondents

518
RFI responses

16
Focus groups hosted

96
Focus group attendees

Who provided feedback?

- Community groups & organizations
- Contractors
- Utility representatives
- Labor unions
- Workforce training partners
- Resident advocates
- Local & state government

RFI Themes

1. One-Stop Shop Model
2. Case Management Approach
3. Maintain Vetted Contractor Directory
4. Take Into Consideration Existing Home/Business Conditions
5. User Friendly Technology/System
6. Depth of Technical Skill/Knowledge
7. Engage Current Workforce System
8. Integrate renters & tenants
9. Strong coordination between existing partners

Focus Group Themes

1. Communication, Marketing, Plain- Language Outreach
2. Trust
3. Coordination, Fragmentation, & Silos
4. Home Existing Conditions
5. Renter & Landlord Inclusion
6. Contractor Quality vs. Over-Exclusion of Local Contractors
7. Reducing Duplicative Paperwork
8. Upfront Funding vs Reimbursement Models
9. DCEO Staffing, Timelines, and Program Readiness
10. Navigator Capacity to Cover Large/ Varied Regions

Navigator Implementation Approach

1

Navigator services

1:1 help for homes and multifamily building owners

Led by: Clean Building Navigator Teams

2

Convenings and task forces

Local partners tackle one barrier

Led by: AEG (Advanced Energy Group)

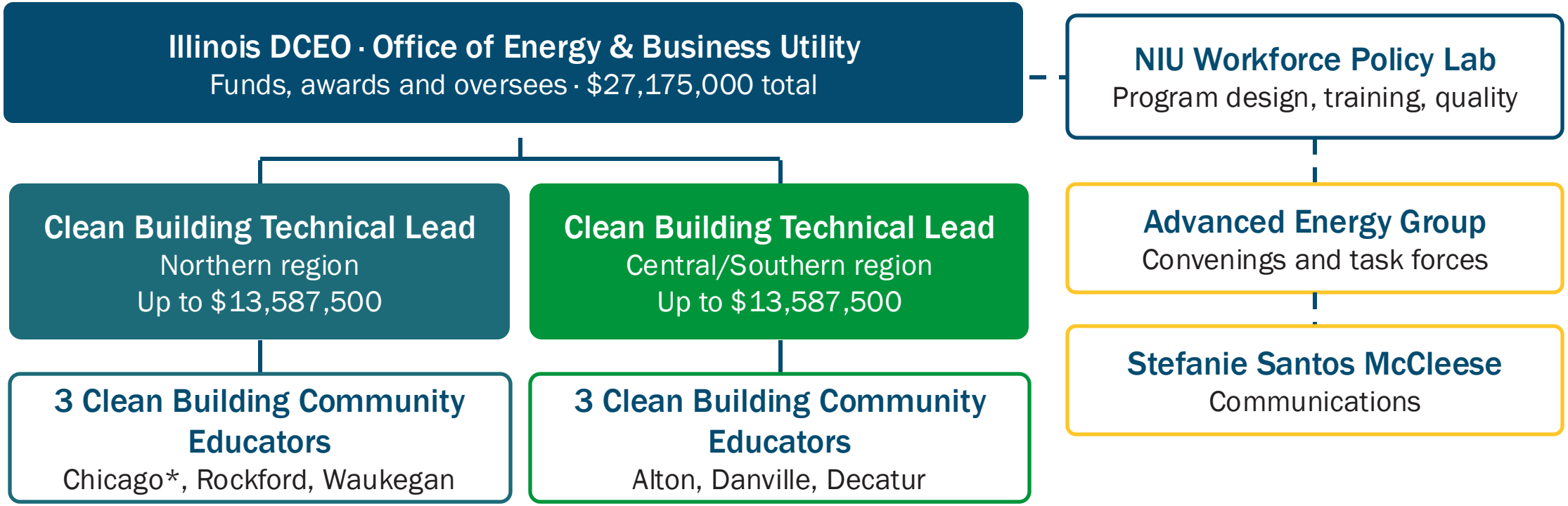
3

Communications

Clear, shared outreach and messages

Led by: Stefanie Santos McCleese

Program Partners



Two awards, one per region. Each Technical Lead funds three Community Educators as subrecipients.

*Chicago: CEJA South, Southwest and West Sides

How the program addresses these barriers

Now that we know the barriers, here is how the program will address each one.

Time	➡	Community Educators research options and give 1:1 help with eligibility and applications.
Language	➡	Plain-language outreach and toolkits, shared by trusted local partners.
Coordination	➡	One Navigator team links utility, state and local programs in one Clean Building Portal.
Workforce	➡	Technical Leads recruit and vet contractors and check the quality of their work. Integrating in existing CEJA workforce programs

Clean Building Navigator Team

Clean Building Technical Lead (CBTL)

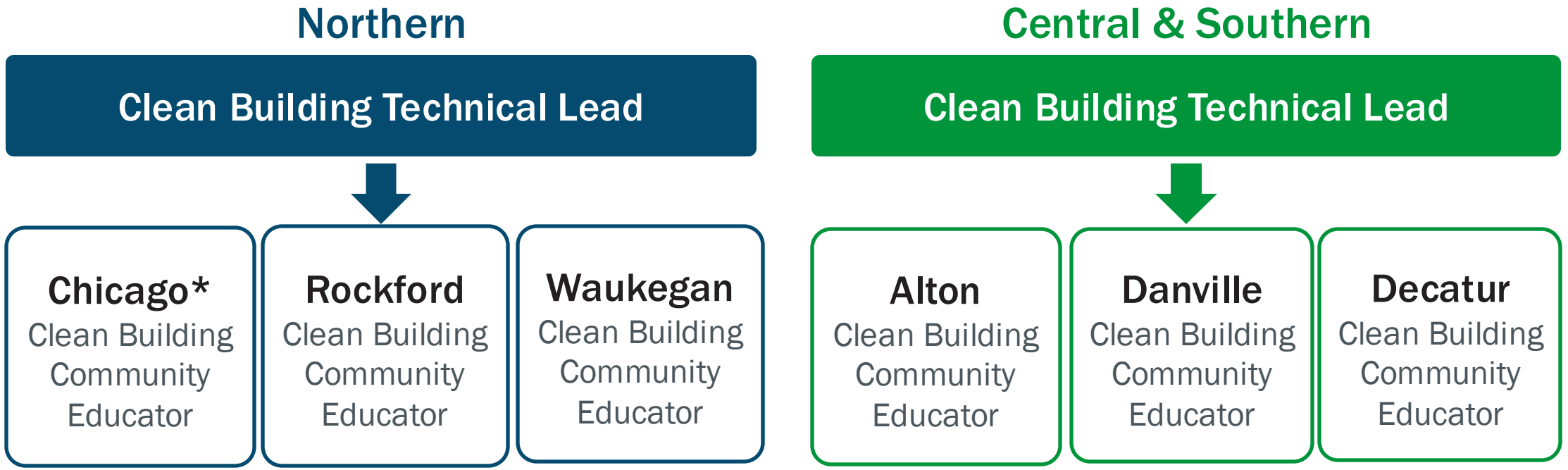
- Primary grantee
- Train and mentor CBCEs
- Hires energy assessors
- Vets and checks contractors
- Programmatic and financial reporting to DCEO
- Monitors CBCEs

Clean Building Community Educator (CBCE)

- Local partner, subgrantee
- Outreach and education
- Recruits residents
- Gives 1:1 energy navigation
- Follows up to the finish

Both join their community's convenings and task force.

One Navigator team per region



*Chicago = South, Southwest, and West sides

Resident pathway: who pays for what

1. Learn about the program
2. Get 1:1 help
3. Energy assessment

After the energy assessment, two paths:

Path 1: Covered by a program

- Resident qualifies. ComEd, Ameren, the municipality or another program pays for the work.
- Navigator helps them apply, matches a vetted contractor and checks the work.

Path 2: Not covered by a program

- The resident doesn't qualify or chooses to do more. The resident manages the cost.
- The navigator matches them with a vetted contractor.

Some residents use both paths at once.

In this program: outreach, 1:1 help, assessments, contractor matching. Not in this program: paying for the work.

Resident journey: two examples

Example 1: Full program coverage

1. Hears about the program at a community event
2. Gets 1:1 help from a Community Educator
3. Energy assessment finds needed upgrades
4. Qualifies: a utility program pays for the work
5. **Vetted contractor does the work; quality check**

Example 2: Not ready to move forward

1. Hears about the program from a neighbor
2. Gets 1:1 help from a Community Educator
3. Energy assessment finds needed upgrades
4. Doesn’t qualify, or isn’t ready to pay
5. **Navigator shares options and follows up later**

Navigation, not construction

✓ Pays for

- Outreach and education
- 1:1 navigation
- Energy assessments
- Contractor vetting and quality checks
- Convenings and task forces

⚠ Does not pay for

- Construction or retrofits
- Equipment or direct install
- Utility bill assistance
- Lobbying

How the Community Task Force works

One-day community convening → Local stakeholders decide which clean energy barrier their task force will take on. → Set a 12-month goal → Task force does the work over 12 months

Facilitated by AEG (Advanced Energy Group).

Task Force Convenings

2

convenings a year in each community

2

virtual task force meetings a month

1

statewide gathering each year

Year 1: preparing the community for the program to be successful.

Alignment Check

Please answer on your screen. It takes a few minutes.

Your answers tell us which roles fit and which partners are missing.



What is one of the barriers to accessing help that this program is working to solve?



Which one of these is a goal of the Clean Building Navigator Program?



Which of these would not be funded by the Clean Building Navigator Program?

4

Funding Opportunity Preview & How to Get Involved

Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) preview: the numbers

$27.175M

total funding

2

awards, one per region

$13.59M

maximum per award

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NOFO preview: who applies

- The Clean Building Technical Lead (CBTL) applies as the primary applicant.
- Clean Building Community Educators (CBCE) join as part of the applicant team and act as subrecipients to the CBTL.
- Applicant teams can apply for both regions. However, they will need to submit two separate applications.

Estimated NOFO timeline

ESTIMATE

All dates are estimates. Final dates will be in the published NOFO.



Nov–Dec 2026

Briefings and follow-up sessions

WE ARE HERE

Dec-Jan 2027

NOFO posted

March 2027

Applications due

Mid-2027

Review, awards and grant agreements

Late 2027

Six-month setup

2028

Services launch

How to get involved



Explore a grant funded role in the program



Attend and connect your partners to upcoming follow up events



Join or encourage partners to join the teaming list



Spread the word

Explore a grant funded role in the program

Clean Building Technical Lead

Primary grantee · one per region

- Illinois nonprofit or for-profit
- Experience with energy navigation, audits or contractor quality checks
- Ties to utilities, state offices or local energy programs
- Grant reporting experience

Clean Building Community Educator

Subrecipient · one per community

- Illinois-based nonprofit or for-profit
- Strong partnerships in the community
- Already offers energy education there
- Experience helping people navigate benefits

☆ Priority points: partners in your region's cities, and Educators who are CEJA grantees.

Attend and connect your partners to upcoming follow up events

December Partner Meet-Up Event

Two regional rooms: Northern, and Central/Southern

- Programs that already help in your community
- What are the barriers residents face in your community
- What applicants should know about working with you
- Partnership requests you might consider
- What you need to prepare for the NOFO

Join or encourage partners to join the teaming list

A teaming list is a shared contact list that helps organizations find partners to apply with.

- Anyone can join, during or after today's session.
- The list is for networking only.
- The NOFO is open to all eligible applicants, on the list or not.
- Being on the list gives no advantage in the review.

Scan the QR code, or

Click here to sign up

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Spread the word

- Start talking to community members about their energy needs
- Share information about the program in your newsletters/social media
- Talk to stakeholders about how they can get involved once the program begins
- Share the slide deck from today with those who were unable to attend

5 Questions & Next Steps

Questions

Type questions in the chat and our moderator will read them.

Specific questions about the NOFO cannot be answered today. However, any questions asked about the NOFO will go into the public FAQ once the NOFO is published.

Next Steps

- Access these slides, recording, FAQ and summary posted online
- Register for the December follow up event
- Watch out for NOFO release date and information
- Send questions to CEO.OEBU@illinois.gov

Join the teaming list

Optional, for networking only. Open during and after the session.

Scan the QR code, or

Click here to sign up

Thank you

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Ready to get involved?

Please answer on your screen. It takes a few minutes.

Your answers tell us which roles fit and which partners are missing.



Which local partners are missing from today's conversation?



Which role could your organization see itself playing?