

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

Community Input Sought - Request for Information (RFI)

Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program

Please respond by submitting your information to the following:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/a084de20f36b490782d653224bbeab5a>

Purpose and Objective

Background

On September 15, 2021, Governor JB Pritzker signed the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act ([P.A. 102-0662](#), referred to herein as “CEJA”) into law, which is designed to equitably transition the state to 100 percent clean energy by 2050. Under CEJA, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (“DCEO or the “Department”) is responsible for implementing workforce development and community support programs designed to prepare the Illinois workforce for the transition to clean energy and to support Illinois communities undergoing energy transitions, including:

- Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program
 1. Clean Jobs Curriculum
 2. Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program
 3. Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program
 4. Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program
 5. Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program
 6. Energy Transition Navigators Program
 7. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program
 8. Energy Transition Community Grant Program
 9. Jobs and Environmental Justice Grant Program
 10. Displaced Energy Workers Bill of Rights
 11. Energy Transition Workforce Commission
 12. Energy Workforce Advisory Council
 13. Utility Job Training Programs (220 ILCS 5/16-108.12)
 14. Coal to Solar and Energy Storage Initiative Fund Grant Program

Scope & Objective: Input on the Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program

To ensure the program’s design best meets the needs of Illinoisans, this request for public information (RFI) seeks input on the **Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program**, which was established by CEJA and will be implemented by DCEO. The Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program (20 ILCS 730/5-40) will create a network of hubs throughout the State that will recruit, prescreen, and provide preapprenticeship skills training, for which participants may attend free of charge and receive a stipend, to create a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers who are prepared for careers in the construction and building trades and clean energy job opportunities therein. The program aims to prepare and connect candidates to an apprenticeship program.

Subject to appropriation, the Department shall provide funding to 3 Climate Works Hubs throughout the State, including one in the Illinois Department of Transportation Region 1, one in the Illinois Department of Transportation Regions 2 and 3, and one in the Illinois Department of Transportation Regions 4 and 5. The Department shall initially select a community-based provider in each region and subsequently choose a community-based provider in each region every three years (20 ILCS 730/5-40(c)). The Climate Works Hubs shall recruit, prescreen, and provide preapprenticeship training to equity investment-eligible persons, as defined by 20 ILCS 730/5-5. This training shall include information about opportunities and certifications relevant to clean energy jobs in the construction and building trades.

DCEO is seeking information from stakeholders on the content and outcomes of preapprenticeship training programs, desired characteristics of providers, opportunities for program coordination, and additional feedback to help inform program creation.

RFI on the Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program

Please note that the RFI is not an application for the program. There will be a future Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) released, after which applicants can compete through the process required by the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708) to receive a grant award. Responding to the RFI is not a prerequisite to participating in a future NOFO process and does not obligate DCEO to conduct a future NOFO process based on the responses received. Further, responding to this RFI does not provide any advantages to the participant in any potential future NOFOs. All information obtained in a participant's response will be made available for public review and may be used by DCEO to inform the implementation of the Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program.

It is anticipated that DCEO will issue additional RFIs to develop other programs listed above.

Participant Organization Information

Please provide for the organization or community submitting a response:

- The organization or community name
- A brief description of the community or organization
- Contact information, telephone number, e-mail address, city, and zip code

Questions

All interested parties are encouraged to respond to any question to which they can provide meaningful or helpful input for DCEO. Responses should not include any confidential or proprietary information. All feedback will be posted on the DCEO website. While there is no word count limit, brevity, where possible, is appreciated.

Focus of the preapprenticeship program

1. What should be the focus of the Climate Works Preapprenticeship Programs, and how should it differ from the [Illinois Works](#) Preapprenticeship Programs that teach multi-craft construction skills?
2. What skills, including workplace, personal effectiveness, academic, and basic technical skills, should be taught to help build a solid foundation for success in a clean energy-focused apprenticeship program?
3. The preapprenticeship training shall include information about opportunities and certifications relevant to clean energy jobs in the construction and building trades.? What certifications should program participants earn in the preapprenticeship programs? Are there others that should be included?

Program success

4. How can the Climate Works Preapprenticeship program ensure participants enter Registered Apprenticeship programs?
5. How can preapprenticeship programs make it more likely that participants succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs and subsequent employment?
6. What are some examples of preapprenticeship programs that have helped under-represented populations enter and succeed in Registered Apprenticeship programs, continued education/training (to support a clean energy career pathway), and/or employment?

7. What support do participants need (such as career counseling, mentoring, tools, transportation assistance, etc.) to increase retention and completion rates?

Coordination

8. How should the Preapprenticeship program coordinate with other programs such as the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Hubs, Energy Transition Navigators Program; Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program; or Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program?
9. How should selected community-based providers work with Climate Works Hubs to recruit, prescreen, and provide preapprenticeship training to equity investment-eligible persons?
10. How should the Preapprenticeship program coordinate with employers and registered apprenticeship programs to help participants along their career path?
11. What are some examples of successful coordination and partnerships between programs that support program participants and engage with employers? (Provide footnotes that describe these programs—or link to more information).

Regional Assets

12. DCEO will fund 3 Climate Works Hubs throughout the State, including one in the Illinois Department of Transportation Region 1, one in the Illinois Department of Transportation Regions 2 and 3, and one in the Illinois Department of Transportation Regions 4 and 5¹. Within these regions, where would you recommend housing the Climate Works Hubs? What are the assets and community strengths (such as community-based providers, strong broadband connections, local economic development incentives, access to apprenticeship programs, etc.) in those regions that would make it an ideal location for a Climate Works Hub? If you are not responding as the representative of a specific region, provide information on the most vital assets in communities in Illinois that may host these Climate Works Hubs.
13. DCEO will initially select a community-based provider in each region (including one in the Illinois Department of Transportation Region 1, one in the Illinois Department of Transportation Regions 2 and 3, and one in the Illinois Department of Transportation Regions 4 and 5) and shall subsequently select a community-based provider in each region every three years. What strengths, capabilities, and resources do community-based providers need to possess to carry out a preapprenticeship program successfully?

Other

14. Please provide past examples, experiences, or lessons learned from similarly purposed grant programs that have supported preapprenticeship programs. Respondents should also consider providing best practices and successful approaches taken in preapprenticeship programs. This can include approaches other states and/or communities in other states have taken.
15. Please provide any additional comments or thoughts not addressed explicitly in this RFI.

¹ <https://idot.illinois.gov/about-idot/idot-regions/index>

RFI on the Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program

Process Overview and Stakeholder Submission

DCEO will review the responses to identify key concepts that may benefit DCEO in designing and implementing its Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program.

Submit your responses to this RFI using this form:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/a084de20f36b490782d653224bbeab5a>

Responses are due by November 30, 2022.