

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

Public Input Sought - Request for Information (RFI)

Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program

Please respond by submitting your information to:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/85770b2873a746788b34b3b5c1a99b0b>

Purpose and Objective

DCEO is seeking information from stakeholders on the anticipated needs of target communities, the structure and eligible uses of funds, and additional feedback to help with the creation of the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program.

Background

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

Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program	Energy Transition Community Grant Program
Clean Jobs Curriculum	Jobs and Environmental Justice Grant Program
Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program	Displaced Energy Workers Bill of Rights
Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program	Energy Transition Workforce Commission
Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program	Energy Workforce Advisory Council
Energy Transition Navigators Program	Utility Job Training Programs (220 ILCS 5/16-108.12)
Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program	Coal to Solar and Energy Storage Initiative Fund Grant Program
Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program	

Scope & Objective: Input on the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program

This request for public information (RFI) seeks input on the **Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program**, which was established by CEJA and will be implemented by DCEO. The Returning Resident Training Program (20 ILCS 730/5-50) will provide training for people in the physical custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC).

IDOC will determine eligibility for program participation and will select the correctional facilities where the clean jobs training will be offered (both men’s and women’s correctional institutions will be selected). Participants must be at least 17 years of age, within 36 months of release, meet program and testing requirements, not pose safety and security risk, and undergo drug testing. People will apply through a simple application and testing process that includes an interview and coaching session. Participants must score at least a 6.0 on the Test for Adult Basic Education (TABE) test or the Illinois Community College Board approved assessment for determining basic skills proficiency.

Following a 1-week pre-program orientation, program training in IDOC institutions and facilities will focus on essential employability skills and vocational or occupational training, with hands-on activities offered in the classroom or outdoors. Training will utilize the Clean Jobs Curriculum that will also be taught in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program to train people for clean energy jobs. The curriculum will be modified as needed to adapt to a correctional context. Structured hands-on activities will be included.

Participants who complete the training will receive a program graduation certificate and certifications or credentials that lead to employment. After release, the program will help connect participants to employers that hire returning residents, offer job and financial coaching, and connect them to support

services to meet reentry needs. People unable to take the clean energy training while in IDOC custody can connect to the Clean Jobs Network Program Hubs for training upon release from commitment.

DCEO will select a Program Administrator for each Program Delivery Area to coordinate with DCEO, IDOC, and the Clean Jobs Network Program Hubs to administer the program. Administrators will work with potential employers to promote policies to hire and support returning residents. DCEO will also select community-based organizations, including educational institutions, to provide program elements at each facility, including training, job coaching, financial coaching, and support services. Program Administrators, instructors and staff must pass a background check administered by IDOC to enter an IDOC institution or facility or to access a committed persons' personal identifying information or other data elements.

Please note, this RFI is not an application to enter the program or for funding to administer the program. There will be a future Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) released after which applicants will be able to 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, a response to this RFI does not provide any advantages to the participant in any potential future NOFOs. All information received in a participant's response will be made available for public review and may be used by DCEO to inform implementation of the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program.

It is anticipated that DCEO will issue additional RFIs for the other projects listed in the table above.

Participant Organization Information

Please provide for the organization or community submitting a response:

- The organization or community name
- Description of the impacted community, if applicable
- Contact information, telephone number, e-mail address, city and zip code
- A brief overview of your organization and/or community

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 confidential and/or proprietary information. All responses will be posted on the DCEO website. Brevity where possible is appreciated.

Focus of Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program

1. What jobs or training areas would be good to focus on in the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program? Please see the allowable clean energy and related sector jobs defined in 20 ILCS 730/5-25. What makes these jobs or training areas a good choice?
2. Which eligible jobs or training areas (*see* 20 ILCS 730/5-25) might be more challenging to focus on in the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program? What makes them more challenging?
3. What skills, including workplace skills, personal effectiveness skills, academic skills, and basic technical skills should be taught to prepare participants for employment, particularly in these

clean energy jobs?

4. How can hands-on skills training be effectively delivered within a correctional facility setting?
5. The Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program will include information related to opportunities and certifications relevant to clean energy jobs. What certifications and opportunities should be included from the allowable areas (see 20 ILCS 730/5-25)?

Program Administration

6. What should DCEO take into consideration when recruiting and selecting Program Administrators and community-based organizations¹ for delivery of program elements?

Program Success

7. What are some ways the program can promote committed participants' success and reduce barriers in completing the training program?
8. How can the program ensure that participants get connected to employment in the clean energy industry following their release?
9. What are some examples of best practices and successful program approaches that have helped committed persons or returning residents receive training and find employment after they are released? Please provide past examples, experiences, or lessons learned from similar programs that have supported returning residents. This can include approaches taken by other states and/or communities in other states.
10. What special issues related to offering training in a correctional facility context should be addressed?

Coordination

11. How should the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training program coordinate with other related workforce and clean jobs programs?
12. How should the program provide support and coordinate with other organizations to help program participants transition to reentry?
13. How should the program coordinate with employers to help participants progress successfully in their employment? What post-employment services are needed? (Provide examples of supports or programs you have seen in the field – or link to more information).
14. Participants face significant barriers after they are released, including passing a criminal background check, getting IDs, finding housing, etc. How should the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training program work to reduce these barriers?

¹ The Program statute defines a "community-based organization" as "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." 20 ILCS 730/5-50(b).

RFI on the Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program

15. What are some ways the program could encourage more employers to hire returning residents? What existing practices, programs, or incentives have you seen be effective? (Provide footnotes that describe these programs—or link to more information).
16. What are some examples of successful coordination and partnerships to support returning residents through training and employment? (Provide footnotes that describe these programs—or link to more information).
17. Please provide any additional comments or thoughts not specifically addressed in this RFI.

Process Overview and Stakeholder Submission

DCEO will review the responses for the purpose of identifying key concepts that may be beneficial to DCEO in designing and implementing the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program.

Responses to this RFI are due by submitting your information to the following link:

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Responses are due by Feb 10, 2023.