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

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	Diana Fuller (Diana.Fuller@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY27-1
Funding Opportunity Title	Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (CEJA)
CSFA Number	420-30-3137
CSFA Popular Name	Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (CEJA)
Anticipated Number of Awards	3
Estimated Total Program Funding	$16,000,000
Award Range	$3000000 - $6500000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	No
Indirect Costs Allowed	Yes
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	09/22/2026
Application Date Range	09/22/2026 - 10/30/2026 : 11:59 PM
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3137-4342.html
Technical Assistance Session	Offered : Yes Mandatory : No Date : 09/30/2026 : 1:00 PM Registration link : https://illinoisstate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_gfx7C2ArQ-2uMg18AC2-Fw#/registration

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program with Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Services

NOFO ID: 3137-4342

For information about grants please visit:
https://dceo.illinois.gov/dceo-grants.html

A. Program Description

1. 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 continue the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program ("Climate Works"). The goal is to sustain a network of Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Hubs that will deliver services at Pre-apprenticeship Centers ("Pre-apprenticeship Centers") throughout the State of Illinois (the "State") that will recruit, prescreen, and provide pre-apprenticeship skills training, for which participants can attend free of charge and receive a stipend, to create a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers prepared for careers in the construction and building trades and clean energy jobs opportunities**.**

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also includes funding for Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program services to support participants of the Climate Works with "wrap-around" support services to improve access and successful program outcomes. Please note that the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program services for the Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program are included in a separate Notice of Funding Opportunity for that program.

2. Program History

The Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program was established by the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, Public Act 102-0662 (20 ILCS 730/5-40). The Department funded the first cycle of Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Centers under an earlier notice, awarding one Center in each of three regions.

DCEO coordinated the first NOFO "cycle" in 2023 to select grantees to administer the Climate Works Program through May 2027. This NOFO represents "cycle 2" to select grantees to administer the Climate Works Program from June 2027 through May 2030.

3. Program Description

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) sets forth the requirements for funding for the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (20 ILCS 730/5-40; 14 Ill. Admin. Code 850) and the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program (20 ILCS 730/5-30), as specified by the Energy Transition Act as part of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, PA 102-662 ("Climate and Equitable Jobs Act," or "CEJA").

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 of Illinois' communities and workers. The Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program and the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program are two of several programs created by CEJA to rectify these historical inequities.

To create a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers prepared for careers in construction and building trades and clean energy jobs opportunities therein, the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program creates 3 regional Pre-apprenticeship Centers throughout the State that recruit, prescreen, and provide pre-apprenticeship skills training.

The grants to operate and administer the Pre-apprenticeship Centers will be awarded to organizations that demonstrate a plan to implement a pre-apprenticeship program rooted in national best practices, with program design elements that meet the requirements described in this NOFO. Upon completion, participants will be connected to and prepared to complete an apprenticeship program.

ILLINOIS CLEAN ENERGY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program is aligned with Illinois' workforce, education, and economic development priorities. Billions of dollars of funding in clean energy technology and infrastructure through CEJA and other state and federal funding sources over the next decade have the potential to be a catalyst for the full inclusion of women, people of color, justice-involved people, and other underrepresented individuals in the construction and clean energy workforce. By providing training, employment, and career development, the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program will help to increase and sustain prosperity in all communities. Below are some workforce, education, and economic development priorities aligned with the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program.

The CEJA Ecosystem

The Climate Works Program is one part of the CEJA Ecosystem, a coordinated network of programs, grantees, and partners established under CEJA to deliver equitable clean energy and workforce outcomes across Illinois. The CEJA Ecosystem advances the State's climate and equity goals by:

- Maximizing impact and reach. Coordinating among CEJA grantees and community-based partners to extend the benefits of clean energy and workforce programs statewide.
- Facilitating seamless access. Ensuring individuals, businesses, and communities can navigate and access opportunities across CEJA programs.
- Fostering collaboration and innovation. Promoting shared learning, data exchange, and new approaches among CEJA-funded organizations.
- Eliminating duplication. Reducing service overlap and improving efficiency and quality for the communities most in need.

Grantees contribute to the CEJA Ecosystem by delivering projects that produce measurable improvements in the environmental, economic, and social well-being of Illinois residents, particularly those in the CEJA target regions of Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) areas and environmental justice communities.

Illinois Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan

The Climate Works Program supports the goals of the Illinois Unified State Plan under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act, which identifies expanded access to clean energy jobs, regional sector partnerships, and reentry support among the State's workforce priorities. Workforce Hubs are expected to coordinate with local workforce innovation areas and the partners that deliver services under that plan.

Illinois Workforce Innovation Board Apprenticeship Committee and Apprenticeship Illinois[1] Framework

[1] Apprenticeship Illinois. **https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ApprenticeshipIL/Pages/default.aspx**.

The Illinois Workforce Innovation Board (IWIB) endorses using registered apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships as a key strategy to build a pipeline of skilled workers to help businesses throughout the State remain competitive. IWIB Apprenticeship Committee's[2] statewide priorities include:

- Support statewide efforts to build upon the existing apprenticeship infrastructure to better align partners, funding, and services to integrate and institutionalize within the Illinois workforce ecosystem fully.
- Support efforts to strengthen partnerships between apprenticeship and the State and local workforce system.
- Help Apprenticeship Illinois target data-driven, high-growth, high-demand industries with quality programs.
- Utilize apprenticeships and other work-based learning strategies to align and support the jobs required for public and private investment at the federal, state, and regional levels

PROGRAM COORDINATION

The programs under this NOFO are authorized by the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act that establishes various new programs and expands existing programs aimed at accelerating the adoption of clean energy sources, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency efforts. CEJA and other state and federal infrastructure investments and regulations require a significant expansion of prevailing wage-compliant clean energy jobs in the construction and building trades, particularly to meet the demand for clean energy projects at public sector buildings. Recognizing that the manufacturing, construction, and maintenance activities required to meet these regulations, incentives, and goals will require significant expansion of businesses and well-trained workers, the CEJA legislation includes several workforce and contractor development programs. These programs include:

- Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (20 ILCS 730/5-20). Creates 14 workforce hubs run by community-based organizations to provide clean jobs training and a career pipeline for equity eligible individuals and displaced energy workers.
- Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program (20 ILCS 730/5-30). Community-based organizations and other nonprofits selected by the Department will provide underserved clean energy job trainees, and job seekers access to tools, mentoring, travel stipends, work clothes, certifications, childcare, and other support services specifically designed to increase access and job retention.
- Energy Transition Navigators (20 ILCS 730/5-35). Community-based organizations that provide education, outreach, and recruitment to eligible populations to access workforce development programs.
- Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (20 ILCS 730/5-40). Trains equity eligible individuals for careers in clean energy sector construction and building trades.
- Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program (20 ILCS 730/5-45). Creates 14 regional contractor incubators to provide training, mentorship, low-cost capital, business planning, low-interest loans, and recruitment opportunities for small clean energy businesses and contractors.
- Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program (20 ILCS 730/5-50). Trains soon-to-be-released (within 36 months) incarcerated people for jobs in the solar and energy efficiency sectors.
- Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program (20 ILCS 730/5-55). A program for contractors seeking to expand their capacity and fill the role of the prime contractor on clean

[2] IWIB Apprenticeship Committee.
https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ApprenticeshipIL/Pages/IWIBApprenticeshipCommittee.aspx.

energy projects through a structured five-year program with mentorship, operation support grants, business coaching, assistance applying for certifications, procurement programs, and preparing bids.

- Jobs and Environmental Justice Grant Program (20 ILCS 730/5-60). A program that provides upfront capital to support the development of projects, businesses, community organizations, and jobs creating opportunities for historically disadvantaged populations, and to provide seed capital to support community ownership of renewable energy projects (including community solar).

The Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Centers are part of an interconnected set of Illinois statewide clean energy workforce and contractor development programs. The Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Centers will be required to collaborate and coordinate with the programs listed above, as appropriate. Successful applicants will demonstrate awareness of these clean energy programs and recognition of the need for collaboration and coordination.

PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

This NOFO will use the definitions established in the Energy Transition Act of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act and the related rules (14 Ill. Admin Code 850), including the definitions for "Equity investment eligible person," "Equity investment eligible community," and “Community-based organization.” It will also use the State of Illinois definition for pre-apprenticeship, which the Apprenticeship Illinois Committee of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board approved.

"Climate Works Hub" means a nonprofit organization selected by the Department to act as a workforce intermediary and to participate in the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (20 ILCS 730/5-5). To qualify as a Climate Works Hub, the organization must demonstrate the following:

- The ability to effectively serve diverse and underrepresented populations, including low-wage or low-skilled workers from economically disadvantaged communities by providing employment services to such populations;
- experience with the construction and building trades, including demonstrated relationships with construction and building trades registered apprenticeship programs, industry contractors and contractor associations;
- the ability to recruit, prescreen, and provide pre-apprenticeship training to prepare workers for employment in the construction and building trades; and
- a plan to provide the following: (A) preparatory classes; (B) workplace readiness skills, such as resume preparation and interviewing techniques; (C) strategies for overcoming barriers to entry and completion of an apprenticeship program; and (D) all prerequisites for acceptance into an apprenticeship program.

“Community-based organization” means an organization that:

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

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

"Eligible populations" means those individuals who meet the requirements to participate in the Program.

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

"Environmental justice communities" means the definition of that term as defined by the Illinois Power Agency pursuant to the Illinois Power Agency Act [20 ILCS 3855], but excluding racial and ethnic indicators, where residents have historically been subject to disproportionate pollution burdens, including pollution from the energy sector. For a map that defines these areas in Illinois, refer to this website: **https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/map.html**.

"Equity Investment Eligible Communities" are the geographic areas throughout Illinois which would most benefit from equitable investments by the State which are designed to combat discrimination and foster sustainable economic growth. Specifically, "Equity Investment Eligible Communities" means the following areas:

- Restore, Reinvest and Renew Areas ("R3 areas") as established pursuant to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (410 ILCS 705), where residents have historically been excluded from economic opportunities, including opportunities in the energy sector. Eligible R3 areas are defined in the R3 service map (website at **https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/map.html**); and
- Environmental justice communities. See the Equity Investment Eligible Community Map (website at: **https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/map.html**), which defines the areas that satisfy the criteria for both R3 areas and environmental justice communities.

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

- persons whose primary residence is in an Equity Investment Eligible Community; or
- persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system; or
- persons who were formerly incarcerated.

Equity focused populations include but aren't limited to:

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

Membership in an equity-focused population does not by itself establish eligibility. Equity-focused populations direct where and how the Grantee conducts outreach and recruitment. Priority of Service, below, governs enrollment and placement

"Nonprofit organization" 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.

Pre-apprenticeship: As defined by the Apprenticeship Illinois Committee of the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board and as set forth in the Climate Works Program rules, pre-apprenticeship programs are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in apprenticeship programs or in another career pathway approach. The Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program is a designated pre-apprenticeship program that must have six core elements:

- **Inclusive Recruitment of Equity Focused Populations:** Pre-apprenticeship programs offer a career pathway and focus, in part, on including the recruitment of individuals (both in employment programs and in the industry sectors) to ensure diversity, access, and inclusion in both pre-apprenticeship programs and in various industries.
- **Industry-Focused Curriculum & Training:** Pre-Apprenticeship curriculum and training are designed to provide pre-apprentices with the knowledge and skills to prepare them for success in an industry-focused apprenticeship program or in other career pathway approaches. Curricula are strategically designed with employers and industry representatives to prepare participants to meet the entry-level requirements of an apprenticeship program. The curriculum should incorporate the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework and contextualized instruction for any basic knowledge and skills (e.g., mathematics, literacy, etc.) necessary to succeed in further apprenticeship training.
- **Hands-On Learning/Work-Based Learning:** Programming includes practical and meaningful hands-on learning activities connected to the occupation, curriculum, and training activities, such as Career Exploration and Career Development Experiences. Learning activities also reinforce foundational professional skills outlined in the Essential Employability Skills framework (personal and work ethic, teamwork, communication, etc.).
- **Retention Services for Successful Participation and Completion:** Retention Support Services can increase retention, reduce barriers, and assist participants in persisting through the program. Providers work directly with participants to identify any barriers to program participation, completion, and employment they may experience and provide participants with supportive services and community resources such as educational & career counseling, financial literacy, and wrap-around services to address and minimize those barriers. Providers monitor retention and may provide ongoing support to pre-apprenticeship completers, such as mentorship or alumni support, as they progress along their career pathway.
- **Partnerships with Contractors and Connections to Apprenticeship Programs:** Pre-apprenticeship programs have documented partnerships with employers and apprenticeships. Pre-apprenticeship programs support participants as they apply for a Registered Apprenticeship positions. For participants that do not seek an apprenticeship or secure employment upon completion, providers should assist the participant in gaining related entry-level employment or additional education and training opportunities along their career pathway.
- **Strive for Credential Acquisition:** Pre-Apprenticeship programs' training and hands-on experience are designed to develop participants' essential and technical skills in preparation for apprenticeship programs or sector-specific job opportunities with sustainable wages. Emerging

best practices for pre-apprenticeship programs include participants acquiring a credential during the pre-apprenticeship program. Emerging definitions for industry-recognized, non-degree, or alternative credentials may include but not be limited to certifications, certificates, credentials, or degrees.

Registered Apprenticeship: As defined by the Office of Apprenticeship of the U.S. Department of Labor ("U.S. DOL"), it is an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally-recognized credential. Registered Apprenticeships are industry-vetted and approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Labor or a State Apprenticeship Agency. The Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program must prepare people for Registered Apprenticeships.

CLIMATE WORKS REGIONS

This NOFO will award grants to fund one Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Center in each of the following three regions:

- Climate Works Northern Region, IDOT Region 1 (blue-shaded)
- Climate Works Central Region, IDOT Regions 2 & 3 (yellow shaded)
- Climate Works Southern Region, IDOT Regions 4 & 5 (white area)

See Figure 1. For more information about the geographic boundaries of IDOT Regions, go to **https://idot.illinois.gov/about-idot/idot-regions.html.** Please note that although the IDOT regions are used to identify the geographic coverage of the Climate Works regions, IDOT is not involved with this program.

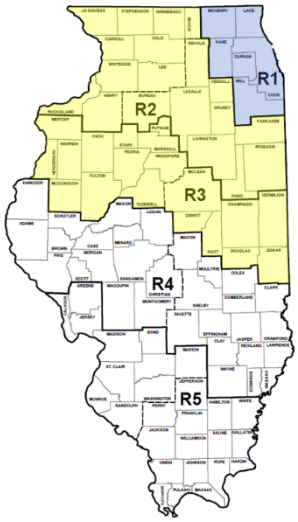


Figure 1. Map indicating the geographic regions of the 3 regional Pre-apprenticeship Centers

Each Climate Works grantee is required to serve a large geographic area based on the IDOT regions. An applicant that applies for a region must be prepared to serve that entire region.

The Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program includes Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program funding for each Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Center to provide wrap-around supportive services for individuals that are eligible to participate in the Climate Works Program.

Each Pre-apprenticeship Center shall prepare participants for registered apprenticeship programs by:

- Recruiting, prescreening, and providing pre-apprenticeship skills training;
- Providing training free of charge;
- Providing stipends to pre-apprentices;
- Providing wrap-around supports and services that help eligible individuals to overcome financial and other barriers to participation in the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program;
- Providing information on opportunities & certifications relevant to clean energy jobs in construction and building trades; and
- Helping program completers get placed into a Registered Apprenticeship.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

The focus of the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program and the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program is to help participants successfully transition into registered apprenticeship programs in construction and building trades with a need for clean energy workforce expansion or other advanced training program or employment.

To be eligible for the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program, a person must meet both of the following:

1. Be an Illinois resident who is aged 18 or older, or who will reach age 18 on or before the participant's scheduled program completion date; and
2. Meet at least one of the following:
    a. Resides in an area that is both an R3 Area, as established pursuant to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (410 ILCS 705), and an environmental justice community;
    b. Resides in an area that is either an R3 Area, as established pursuant to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (410 ILCS 705), or an environmental justice community;
    c. Meets the definition of a displaced energy worker; or
    d. Is a person who faces barriers to employment, including but not limited to low educational attainment, prior involvement with the criminal legal system, language barriers, or being a graduate or current member of the foster care system.

Item 1 applies to every participant. Item 2 states alternative routes to eligibility, and a person needs to meet only one of them. A person who qualifies under 2(c) or 2(d) is eligible regardless of where that person resides.

Confidentiality. A participant may decline to disclose status as a person who was formerly incarcerated or as a person who is or was a member of the foster care system. The Grantee protects the confidentiality of that information and may not require its disclosure to the Grantor, including CEJA regional administrators, as a condition of participation. The Grantor may publish data on these populations in aggregate. Because disclosure is voluntary, the preference described under PRIORITY OF SERVICE is applied on the basis of the information applicants choose to provide.

Participants must have a high school diploma or GED/HiSET (High School Equivalency Test) or be in a program preparing them for a high school diploma or equivalent. The age requirement is stated above: a participant must be aged 18 or older, or must reach 18 on or before that participant's scheduled program completion date. DCEO will consider applications for programs that are youth or adult-focused, including programs that utilize an integrated career and academic preparation system (ICAPS) framework that combines the pre-apprenticeship curriculum with completion of high school equivalency or English language training.

PRIORITY OF SERVICE

The Pre-apprenticeship centers must prioritize the enrollment of program participants where the applicant pool allows.

1. At least one-third of program placements are for applicants who reside in an area that is both an R3 Area and an environmental justice community.

2. At least two-thirds of program placements are for applicants who satisfy item 1, or who reside in an area that is either an R3 Area or an environmental justice community. The two-thirds includes the one-third described in item 1. It is not additional to it.
3. Priority for the remaining program placements is given to applicants who are displaced energy workers, applicants who face barriers to employment, and applicants who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system, regardless of the applicant's area of residence.

Within items 1 and 2, preference is given to applicants who face barriers to employment, such as low educational attainment, prior involvement with the criminal legal system, and language barriers, and to applicants who are graduates of or current members of the foster care system. Priority of service governs enrollments. It does not govern eligibility. A person who falls in none of these tiers may still be eligible under PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY above.\

NOTE: The Department recognizes that not all Pre-apprenticeship center locations will have a significant number of individuals who reside in R3 or environmental justice communities. Grantees will be required to describe their priority of service considerations in Enrollment Policy and Procedures.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

CEJA Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeships are designed to: 1) equip participants with essential pre-apprenticeship skills; 2) prepare candidates for careers in clean energy, construction, and building trades; 3) support smooth transitions into registered apprenticeships; and 4) expand equitable access to workforce opportunities. Projects funded under this program must include the program elements that are outlined in this section in coordination with other CEJA grantees as applicable. Grantees will be expected to develop policies and procedures that incorporate these program elements through the administration of the program and the delivery of program services. Applicants are also encouraged to incorporate national best practices. Organizations applying for funding may deliver all program elements themselves or may partner with other organizations to deliver various program elements.

1. OVERALL PROGRAM DESIGN: Applicants must provide information on how they will design, develop, and implement a Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Center to recruit, prescreen, provide pre-apprenticeship skills training, and help place participants in registered apprenticeships in the construction and building trades and clean energy job opportunities therein. Applicants must also provide information on how they will implement the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program as part of the Pre-apprenticeship Center. Applicants must describe which program elements will be delivered by the main applicant. Applicants must also describe how they will partner with or coordinate with other organizations to provide any program elements not delivered by the main applicant such as participant recruitment and assessments, case management, technical training, work-based training, supportive services, and transition/placement services to participants.

2. GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE: Each Pre-apprenticeship Center will be required to serve participants in a large region. These large regions make it unrealistic to serve job seekers from a single location equitably. Applicants should explain how they intend to reach the target populations across the region and provide equitable access to training, academic support, and supportive services. Partnerships with other organizations should be detailed in memorandums of understanding and in the project budget. Competitive applicants will offer training in more than one location within the region. Applicants must identify each proposed training location, the communities it is intended to serve, and the facilities, space, and equipment available at that location for training, operations, and

administration, including the laboratory space where hands-on practice will occur. For each location, state the availability of parking and the nearest public transit access.

3. ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITY: Applicants must describe the lead organization's size, structure, and history, including whether it is newly established or long operating, and the role of each partner, subcontractor, and subrecipient on the applicant team. Applicants must demonstrate the team's capacity to meet the training and transition outcomes it proposes, drawing on performance data and outcomes from comparable prior work.

4. STAFFING: To fully implement the program, successful applicants must outline how the key program areas will be staffed to ensure the quality delivery of programs and services. These key program areas include program administration, outreach and recruitment, intake, wrap-around services (non-academic needs) that reduce barriers to participation for eligible individuals, student support services (academic needs), instruction, contractor/apprenticeship program engagement, transition and follow-up, and data entry. Applicants will provide this information by completing Attachment 4: Staffing Plan and providing staff resumes, instructor credentials, partnership agreements, or MOUs. Instructors must hold applicable certifications (i.e. NABTU, NCCER, OSHA-10, or First Aid/CPR). An applicant may name an instructor who holds the required certification or an instructor who plans to acquire it. Where an instructor plans to acquire certification, the applicant must say so and must state the timeline and the cost. Certification must be in place before that instructor delivers the instruction.

5. EQUITY-FOCUSED PROGRAM CULTURE: Applicants must provide information about how their pre-apprenticeship model (including recruitment, partnerships, training, and barrier reducing supportive services) considers the background and experience of all individuals in the industry (hiring, advancement, retention, and earnings). Applicants must consider how their program will increase access, enrollment, and completion for all individuals, including equity investment eligible persons. Applicants must outline strategies for how to foster a shared identity in the program and a welcoming, inclusive environment. The focus on equity should include all aspects of program design and partnerships, including successful transition and retention in a registered apprenticeship program.

   An equity lens is a process for analyzing how program policies and practices affect eligible populations so that differences in access, service quality, and outcomes are identified and corrected. CEJA grantees should apply an equity lens by examining who reaches the program and who does not, where participants stop out, what barriers explain the difference, and then changing program delivery in response. The application asks for the applicant team's record of delivering services to eligible populations, its experience helping participants address barriers to employment such as low educational attainment, involvement with the criminal legal system, participation in the foster care system, and language barriers, and the ways leadership and staff draw on lived experience or work history in the community being served. Specific examples carry more weight than statements of commitment, including instances where the applicant changed a service, schedule, location, or partnership after analyzing its effect on participants.

6. COORDINATION: Pre-apprenticeship Centers shall coordinate with other CEJA-funded programs, including the Energy Transition Navigators Program, Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, and the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program. In addition, applicants should provide information about their plans to coordinate with Illinois Works Pre-apprenticeship programs and Local Workforce Innovation Areas, local and regional Apprenticeship Navigators, and Intermediaries focused on construction and building trades. Applicants are also expected to coordinate with building trades, registered apprenticeship programs, industry contractors, contractor associations, community colleges, community-based organizations, and secondary schools, among others. All applicants are

expected to develop structured pathways (in partnership with key stakeholders in the industry) for program completers to transition successfully into registered apprenticeship programs.

7. PARTNERSHIPS: Where appropriate, Pre-apprenticeship Centers may enter into agreements with other organizations that can provide outreach and recruitment, case management, pre-apprenticeship training, wrap-around supportive services, or other services for participants throughout their region. Partner community-based organizations may be better able to reach the target participants in certain regions/neighborhoods or participants with specific backgrounds. Evidence of partnerships should be demonstrated in memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and through line items in applicants' proposed budgets.

8. OUTREACH & RECRUITMENT: Applicants must outline proactive recruitment and outreach strategies to enroll eligible individuals in their programs and explain how they will be equitable and inclusive of all populations, including eligible populations (see definitions above). Outreach strategies should acknowledge disparities in regional construction and building trades occupations and help applicants make informed decisions about their participation. Applicants do not need to serve all populations targeted by this NOFO; they can focus on one or more of the eligible individuals defined in previous sections.

    a. Climate Works grantees are primarily responsible for the recruitment and prescreening of Climate Works participants. CEJA Energy Transition Navigators may provide education, outreach, and recruitment for the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program and refer interested candidates to Pre-apprenticeship Centers. Where a Pre-apprenticeship Center location sits in an area an Energy Transition Navigator serves, the Center and the Navigator may agree that the Navigator conducts outreach, recruitment, and eligibility prescreening for that location.

    b. Successful Pre-apprenticeship Center applicants will demonstrate their knowledge and experience working with and providing services to the target populations. They should demonstrate how members of these target populations have been involved in shaping the design of their proposed program. In addition, Pre-apprenticeship grant applicants must demonstrate a clear understanding of the entrance requirements into union and non-union registered apprenticeship programs and, if selected, communicate those requirements to program candidates before enrolling them in the pre-apprenticeship program. Apprenticeship requirements must be integrated into prerequisites for participation in the program. Applicants must create a plan for marketing, outreach, providing wraparound supports, other supportive services, and accommodations. Applicants are encouraged to identify and train mentors to support pre-apprentices throughout the program.

    Note that the Climate Works statute requires that the Department and the Illinois Department of Corrections jointly conduct activities to support recruitment of eligible candidates to the Program, consistent with Section 5-8A-4.2 of the Unified Code of Corrections and 20 ILCS 730/5-40(e-5). Those activities include providing information on the community-based program provider serving the area in which an individual preparing for release is expected to reside, and making available a process through which an individual may choose to consent to be contacted by that provider. Pre-apprenticeship Centers must be prepared to receive and act on candidate referrals arising from that process, and to coordinate with the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program where a candidate is served by both.

9. APPLICATION, ENROLLMENT & REFERRALS: Successful applicants will outline a process to review potential participants' eligibility for the Pre-apprenticeship program through a pre-screen assessment, application, and interview. Program participants must meet the requirements set out under PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY above. Organizations that are offered and accept an award through the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program will be required to use the provided pre-screen assessments, applications, interview questionnaires, wrap-around service assessments, and commitment agreements. Applicants must refer candidates who do not meet the minimum program requirements to alternative education and training services in their communities, such as free literacy, high school equivalency, and other Workforce Innovation and Opportunity (WIOA) programs. A candidate that is referred to an alternative workforce program is not enrolled in Climate Works. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction funds may pay for adult education, high school equivalency preparation, or tutoring only where the Center documents that other funding sources were pursued and are not available. This is not a common or expected cost.

10. CURRICULA AND INSTRUCTION: The Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program must include either the North American Building Trades Unions (NABTU) Apprenticeship Readiness Program (ARPS) Multi-craft Core Curriculum (MC3) or the National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) Core Curriculum. As required by the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program statute (20 ILCS 730/5-40(d-5)), preference will be given to programs that have an agreement with NABTU to utilize the Multi-Craft Core Curriculum or successor curriculums. Applicants should explain how clean energy topics or examples will be integrated into the NABTU or NCCER basic construction curriculum. Examples of clean energy construction topics include electrical and safety basics, solar PV basics, or building energy efficiency basics.

    This construction core curriculum should be supplemented, where appropriate, with a basic understanding of technologies related to clean energy and clean energy job opportunities in the construction and building trades. Any supplemental curricula should be based on industry best practices and utilize nationally-recognized curricula developed by organizations such as NCCER or the Building Performance Institute (BPI).

    In total, curricula must provide at least 150 hours but no more than 300 hours of instruction. The curriculum must have a strong emphasis on hands-on practice in a construction laboratory and at job sites (see Attachment 3 Curriculum Plan). The program should lead students to obtain, at a minimum, a NABTU or NCCER certification, an OSHA-10 certification, and a First Aid/CPR certification. Applicants may propose to *not* offer training in OSHA-10 or First Aid/CPR; to do so, they must document that this safety training will be offered by the Registered Apprenticeship Program, advanced training, or workplace where students will apply.

    Essential Employability Skills
    In addition to these construction and clean energy components, the curriculum must include workplace readiness skills, utilizing the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework or similar models approved by the Department (see: https://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/illinois-essential-employability-skills-framework.) The curriculum should also include training to prevent discrimination, sexism, bullying, and harassment within workplaces, and should prepare participants with conflict management skills and strategies for encountering these issues in the workplace. It should provide guidance on transition into registered apprenticeship programs and provide mock interview and aptitude test training. It should also introduce different clean energy career pathways and provide a resume, job application, interview, and job search guidance.

Applicants must submit a proposed curriculum outline including hours, instruction modules offered, length of the training, and the logistical plan for delivery (see Attachment 3- Curriculum Plan). Evidence of support for the curricula from apprenticeship programs and contractor partners should be included in the application and detailed in the memorandum of agreement.

Applicants may offer other applicable and relevant certifications related to clean energy job opportunities, but they are not required to do so. Examples of organizations issuing potentially relevant certifications or exams include:

- North American Board of Certified Energy Practitioners (NABCEP) PV Associate exam
- The Building Performance Institute (BPI) Building Science Principles exam
- National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) 70E Arc Flash Training

Some registered apprenticeship programs require additional training, typically four to six weeks, before they will accept a candidate. Where that is the case, an applicant may propose the course as a named addendum to its Climate Works curriculum, stating the hours, the content, and the apprenticeship program that requires it. Hours in the addendum are additional to the 150 to 300 hour range and do not require approval to exceed 300 hours. Stipends and income support may be provided during this training based on the project workplan and budget.

11. INSTRUCTIONAL DELIVERY: Applicants are encouraged to provide flexible program delivery 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:
    - Content that can be completed on-demand when convenient for participants
    - Virtual or face-to-face instruction options
    - Full-time and part-time training options
    - Open entry and exit options
    - Modular programming that avoids redundant training for participants who may already possess given qualifications
    - Ongoing guidance and instruction after completion to help with job placements
    - Alternative testing approaches to demonstrate material mastery

    Applicants must explain how they will coordinate education and learning, necessary support and retention services, and coaching from other partner institutions. The Department is also interested in applicants who will use innovative teaching and learning tools, including online/virtual learning, such as Alternative Reality (AR) or Virtual Reality (VR) immersive training and learning techniques, among others (if applicable).

12. WORK-BASED LEARNING AND PRACTICUMS: Applicants must include, as part of their program, opportunities for pre-apprentices to do construction work at job sites while taking instruction or immediately after completing instruction. Job site practicums are generally supervised by the program instructors and are coordinated with community-based organizations, contractors, or government entities that give students opportunities to put into practice what they learned in the classroom (see Attachment 3 Curriculum Plan). Applicants should outline existing or planned partnerships for work-based learning and practicum worksites. Work-based learning must be delivered consistent with CEJA Policy 01-PL-26, Work-Based Learning. Hands-on practice is required within it. Applicants must:

- provide work-based learning equal to at least 10 percent of training hours;
- include hands-on practice in which participants use tools and materials, in a construction laboratory, at a job site, or both; and
- document work-based learning specifically. An application that documents work-based learning only by linking to course pages is not sufficient.

Where a job site is not available for insurance or other regulatory reasons, hands-on practice must be delivered in a laboratory setting. Job site visits and tours of U.S. DOL-registered apprenticeship programs are valuable additions to a program but do not by themselves satisfy the hands-on practice requirement.

13. SUPPORTIVE SERVICES: Supportive Services are intended to help participants overcome financial and other barriers to participate in and complete the CEJA training program that are paid with the CEJA Barrier Reduction funds. The table below summarizes the supports that are integral and must be offered to CEJA participants. Successful applicants will address these supports in their program design proposal. Applicants may also propose additional supportive services that are not listed to meet unique participant needs.

Table 1: Support 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 Support Services (including but not limited to)**
Transportation costs, including car repairs, gas cards, or bus passes	Tutoring (especially in math)	Job exploration, search and placement services
Childcare or family care	Make-up classes	Resume writing and mock interviews
	Retesting	Job fairs with clean energy employers
Driver's education and driver's license fees	Educational enrichment	Follow up support services
Personal health, including dental vision and mental health care	Technology assistance for virtual learning	Education and training costs associated with entering an apprenticeship program
Emergency bill payments, rental assistance or emergency housing	Expenses related to certifications, testing or applications	Other wrap around services needed to obtain or retain an apprenticeship or employment
Financial literacy		
Referrals for other services (food, housing, rental assistance, substance abuse treatment)		
Legal assistance, including record expungement		

Climate Works grantees must develop and implement a supportive service policy that describes how they will offer supportive services to assist participants in maximizing training program success including the placement and retention in a registered apprenticeship program. Climate Works

grantees must identify the appropriate supportive services for each participant based on an individualized assessment that is updated throughout the life of the program based on the specific needs of the program participant. Supportive services must be provided consistent with CEJA Policy 02-PL-24, Barrier Reduction. Applicants must have the ability to provide flexible, timely services and funds to address the unique and often time-sensitive barriers that may arise during participants' training. See the Budget Appendix for more information.

14. STIPENDS & INCOME SUPPORTS: Pre-apprenticeship Centers must offer stipends to Climate Works participants to help them stay financially solvent during the training period. Grantee should budget for an average hourly stipend of $15 per contact hour with the program participant. Income support including stipends or incentives are payments made to a program participant that can be used for living expenses. The stipend or incentives are not considered wages, so Social Security or Medicare taxes are not withheld, however, it still counts as taxable income for income tax purposes. This 2027 Climate Works NOFO provides more flexibility to Grantees to structure the participant income support budget.

    - Grantees may provide stipends on a seat-time basis however this is not a requirement
    - Grantees may offer performance-based or milestone-based incentives paid based on a participant's attendance and performance in the training program (i.e., passing training assessments, earning credentials, successfully completing training modules, demonstrating technical skills, etc.).

    Participant income support will be paid with different funding sources depending on each "part" of the CEJA training program.

    - Part 1 – Climate Works Essential Employability Skills Training: Income support paid for the following training topics will be paid out of the Barrier Reduction Funds:
        - Introduction to construction and the trades
        - Clean energy basics
        - Soft skills based on Illinois Essential Employability Skills
        - Test taking skills
    - Part 2 – Climate Works Technical Training: Income Support paid during the technical training will be paid using the CEJA Climate Works Program Funds including:
        - NABTU Multi-Craft Core Curriculum (MC3) or NCCER Core Curriculum
        - OSHA 10-hour
        - First Aid/CPR
    - Part 3 – Work-Based Training: Income Supports paid that are associated with Work-Based Training will be paid using the CEJA Climate Works Program Funds. It is important to note that On-The-Job Training contracts reimbursement may exceed the $15 per hour average rate.

    Depending on the approved project workplan and budget stipends and income supports *may* be provided through program completion. Please note that stipends do not continue after a participant transitions into a registered apprenticeship program or into advanced training with another provider. Grantees must develop and implement a Participant Income Support / Stipend / Incentive policy that describes how they will structure the income supports to assist participants in maximizing training program success, apprenticeship placement and retention. Budget appendix for more information

15. TRANSITION SERVICES & FOLLOW-UP: Applicants must provide plans on how they will assist students in transitioning to registered apprenticeship programs in construction and building trades with a need for clean energy workforce expansion. They must also include plans for referring students

not enrolling in apprenticeship programs to advanced construction education and training programs or employment. Recent state and federal infrastructure investments require a significant expansion of prevailing wage-compliant clean energy jobs in the construction and building trades, particularly to meet the demand for clean energy projects at public sector buildings. Recommended construction and building trades with a need for clean energy workforce expansion include but are not limited to:

- Electrician
- Heat and frost insulator
- Ironworker
- Carpenter
- Laborer
- Roofer and waterproofer
- Plumber/pipefitter
- Industrial maintenance mechanic
- Sheet metal worker
- HVAC installer/service technician

Applicants must provide evidence of formal partnerships with registered apprenticeship programs, labor unions, industry trade groups, and contractors, including matriculation agreements with registered apprenticeship programs for pre-apprenticeship program completers and letters from signatory contractors agreeing to hire apprentices. They should provide evidence that the pre-apprenticeship training will prepare students for registered apprenticeship programs in construction and building trades with a need for clean energy workforce expansion.

Applicants must outline how they will provide continued case management and guidance to program participants as they transition into a registered apprentice program. Follow-up services must be available for at least one year following training program completion. This may require applicants to identify how they will sustain case management and tracking activities after the grant period is over, U.S. Dept. of Labor data show that one-quarter of construction apprentices cancel (drop out or are released) before completion. The rate for Black apprentices is significantly higher at 37%. Over 60% of these cancelations occur in the first year of apprenticeships, and over 85% occur within the first two years. Mentoring resources are available from the following organizations:

- ACE Mentoring Program of American Construction Management Association of America - **https://www.acementor.org/**
- Construction Career Development Initiative - **https://ccdi.org/**
- National Association of Women in Construction - **https://www.nawic.org/**

16. DATA TRACKING AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT: Applicants must show that a system will be implemented to track demographic information for program participants, including applicant number, broken down by race, gender, age, geography and veteran status; the number of individuals accepted and placed into apprenticeship programs in the construction and building trades; and the number of individuals who remain in apprenticeship programs in the construction and building trades or have become journeymen one calendar year after their placement. Note that this may require applicants to identify how they will track the grant activities and outcomes after the grant period is over. Grantees will perform data tracking and use reporting systems as directed by DCEO.

    Applicants must also describe an approach that will be used to assess the effectiveness of the program and how this information will be used to improve program delivery. This assessment may include surveys of program completers regarding overall satisfaction with the training activities

delivered and appropriateness to the targeted job opportunities, surveys of employers concerning the comprehensiveness of coverage of required job skills, etc. In addition, the assessment plan should indicate how the results of the assessment activities will be used to improve the training program in a continuous manner.

Grantees are required to cooperate with external evaluation efforts, as directed by DCEO.

4. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching is not required for this opportunity.

5. Allowable and Unallowable Activities

The Department will provide grant funding for all allowable activities that are consistent with the program rules and the requirements of this NOFO. Unallowable activities include but are not limited to lobbying, fundraising, entertainment, political activities, alcohol, food and or personal-use activities as outlined at 2 CFR 200.

6. Allowable and Unallowable Costs

The Department will provide grant funding for all allowable activities that are consistent with the program rules, requirements of this NOFO and the requirements specified in 2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards ("2 CFR 200"), the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708/1 et seq.) ("GATA") and this NOFO.

7. Pre-Award Costs

Costs from a date specified by the Department (around the time that the Notice of State Award is accepted by the Grantee) through the grant period of performance start date may be allowed to be charged to the grant as long as they meet the requirements specified in 2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Costs Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards ("2 CFR 200"), the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (30 ILCS 708/1 et seq.) ("GATA") and this NOFO

8. Payment Methodology

The payment of grant funds will be made by providing a variable advance with the remainder based on the grantee's immediate cash needs and the reimbursement of costs. The Department may authorize an initial disbursement in an amount sufficient to address the Grantee's immediate cash needs according to their reported and approved obligations. Thereafter, the payments may be made for the dual purpose of reimbursing for expenditures incurred as well as documented cash needs of the Grantee as approved by the Department.

9. Relevant Program-Specific Rules and Regulations

The administrative rules for the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program can be found at 14 Ill. Admin. Code Part 850.

10. Performance Goals and Measures

The program's goals are the number of participants recruited and enrolled, the number who complete the program, the certifications they earn, the number who transition into a registered apprenticeship program in the construction and building trades, and the number who achieve a secondary outcome. Applicants must enter projected figures in Attachment 2: Activities and Outcomes of the Project Work Plan, by quarter and cumulatively.

- **Recruited participant.** An individual who has expressed interest in the program and provided contact information for follow-up. Reported on the Attachment 2 row *Inquiry contacts*.

- **Enrolled participant.** An individual who has completed the prescreen assessment and the program application, has been determined eligible, has signed the commitment agreement, and has begun receiving services. Reported on the Attachment 2 row *Enrolled participants*. Applicants must also project the row *Program applicants*, which counts individuals who have started or completed the application and the intake assessments but have not yet enrolled.
- **Completed participant.** An individual who has completed all curriculum modules with at least 80 percent attendance and a score of 70 percent or higher on each module assessment, and who has met the requirements for the credentials and certifications the applicant proposed.
- **Certifications earned.** The number of participants who earn each required certification. Reported on three Attachment 2 rows: *NABTU MC3 or NCCER Core certifications earned*, *OSHA-10 certifications earned*, and *First Aid/CPR certifications earned*. Where an applicant has documented that the registered apprenticeship program, advanced training, or workplace will provide OSHA-10 or First Aid/CPR, that row may be projected at zero.
- **Primary outcome transition.** A completer who has applied to a registered apprenticeship program in the construction and building trades and been accepted, or who has applied and been placed on a waiting list for one. Reported on two Attachment 2 rows, *RAP applicants (applied or wait-listed)* and *RAP placements*. A completer who does not enroll in a registered apprenticeship program and is instead hired in the construction and building trades or clean energy, or enrolls in an advanced construction training program. Reported on two Attachment 2 rows, *Job placements in construction/building trade/clean energy employment* and *Advanced training placements*. Count each completer on the row reflecting the furthest stage reached.
- **Secondary outcome transition.** A completer who enters other (outside of construction or clean energy) education, training, or employment. Reported on two Attachment 2 rows, *Job placements in construction/building trade/clean energy employment* and *Advanced training placements*. A completer counted as a primary outcome transition is not also counted as a secondary outcome transition.
- **Priority of service.** Applicants must project enrolled participants stated in PRIORITY OF SERVICE based on the applicant pool. Reported on the two Attachment 2 rows under Eligibility Characteristics of Enrolled Participants: *Resident of an area that is BOTH an R3 area AND an environmental justice community*, and *Resident of EITHER an R3 area OR an environmental justice community*.
- **Outreach and partnerships.** Applicants must also project the Attachment 2 rows *Outreach events delivered* and *Partners*. These are activity measures rather than outcome measures, and the Department uses them to assess whether a recruitment strategy is sized to the enrollment the applicant proposes.

Grantees will report every metric through the CEJA Reporting System. Completions and transitions require third-party verification; enrollments are verified from grantee-supplied information.

Grantees must also describe how they will assess the effectiveness of the program and use that information to improve program delivery and must cooperate with external evaluation as the Department directs.

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing funds appropriated by the State of Illinois budget (PA 104-0464) and authorized by CEJA. The Department will make initial awards up to $10,000,000 for the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program and up to $6,000,000 for the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program Services for a statewide total of $16,000,000 for the first 12 months of the awards.

- The initial grant awards will range from $2,000,000 to $4,000,000 for the delivery of the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program in each region identified in Figure 1 of this NOFO.
- The initial grant awards will range from $1,000,000 to $2,500,000 for the delivery of the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Services to support the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program in each of the three regions identified in Figure 1 of this NOFO
- The initial grant awards for the two programs combined, will range from $3,000,000 to $6,500,000 for each region identified in Figure 1 of this NOFO
- Cost per participant varies with the length and design of the training program and with the outcomes proposed. The budget appendix, states the Department's planning expectations for enrollment and outcome levels by program size, for participant cost by cost objective, and for total program cost. Applicants should build their budgets against that guidance and explain in the application what drives their own cost per participant. Awards will range from approximately $3 million to $6.5 million based on the quality of the program, number of participants and projected outcomes. The Department expects to make 3 awards through this NOFO.

The period of performance is expected to be May 1, 2027 through April 30, 2028.

An applicant may submit multiple applications if they intend to administer the program in more than one of the regions outlined in Figure 1 of this NOFO (IDOT Region 1, IDOT Region 2 with Region 3, or IDOT Region 4 with IDOT Region 5). However, an applicant may only submit one application per region.

The anticipated start date for awards is May 2027. The initial 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 $16,000,000 may be available for each of the twelve (12) month renewal periods.

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

1. 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 15% of modified total direct cost (MTDC). Once established, the De Minimis Rate may be used indefinitely. The State of Illinois must verify the calculation of the MTDC annually in order to accept the De Minimis Rate.

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

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

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

RATE:

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

BASE:

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

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

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/businesses/small-businesses-self-employed/get-an-employer-identification-number**)
- 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 (**https://sam.gov**)
- Is in Good Standing with the Illinois Secretary of State, as applicable (**https://www.ilsos.gov/departments/business_services/corp.html**)
- Is not on the Illinois Stop Payment list
- 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).

Currently, federal memo M-21-20 allows entities to apply for grant awards without a valid UEI number. The UEI number must be obtained prior to grant execution. The State of Illinois has adopted this guidance for the issuance of state awards also.

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.

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.).

1. **Eligible Applicants include:**
   Nonprofit organizations that meet the definition of a “Climate Works Hub” in Section A3 of the NOFO and restated below.

   "Climate Works Hub" means a nonprofit organization selected by the Department to act as a workforce intermediary and to participate in the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (20 ILCS 730/5-5). To qualify as a Climate Works Hub, the organization must demonstrate the following:
   - *The ability to effectively serve diverse and underrepresented populations, including low-wage or low-skilled workers from economically disadvantaged communities by providing employment services to such populations;*
   - *experience with the construction and building trades, including demonstrated relationships with construction and building trades registered apprenticeship programs, industry contractors and contractor associations;*
   - *the ability to recruit, prescreen, and provide pre-apprenticeship training to prepare workers for employment in the construction and building trades; and*
   - *a plan to provide the following: (A) preparatory classes; (B) workplace readiness skills, such as resume preparation and interviewing techniques; (C) strategies for overcoming barriers to entry and completion of an apprenticeship program; and (D) all prerequisites for acceptance into an apprenticeship program.*

   The Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program applicant team must also deliver the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program services for pre-apprenticeship participants and enrollees. The Climate Works grantee may propose to deliver the barrier reduction services themselves or may subcontract with partner with a community-based organization or other nonprofit to deliver these services. Note that the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction services must be delivered by a community-based organization or a nonprofit organization that has:
   - The ability to effectively serve diverse and underrepresented populations in the proposed region;

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

The applicant team must have the capacity to deliver the services outlined above, including a demonstrated ability to hire and retain project staff and instructors when the grant commences. Applicants may apply to deliver the Pre-apprenticeship training in one or more of the three regions. Proposals must provide performance data and outcomes from relevant prior work to demonstrate capacity and effectiveness.

Experienced and New Providers: This NOFO will consider organizations that have experience delivering construction pre-apprenticeship and other construction training programs, and who successfully demonstrate connections to existing registered apprenticeship programs. Applicants that have not operated a pre-apprenticeship program but have experience serving the target populations are encouraged to apply in partnership with other relevant organizations that have experience in effective design and delivery of the required services.

Organizations that wish to apply to deliver the Pre-apprenticeship Program in multiple regions or to deliver multiple CEJA workforce programs (including the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program, the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, the Energy Transition Navigator Program, and the Clean Jobs Contractor Incubator Program) must consider their capacity to deliver all proposed services if their proposals are selected.

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

Each applicant (unless the applicant is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110 or has an exception approved by the State) must:

- Be registered in SAM.gov. SAM.gov registrations must be set to “public.”
- Provide a valid UEI number in the GATA Grantee Portal registration.
- Continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award. DCEO may 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 DCEO is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the DCEO 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.

3. Other

Applicants may submit multiple applications for this opportunity.

If an applicant intends to request funding to serve multiple Climate Works Regions they must submit a unique and complete application for each Climate Works Region they are seeking to serve.

D. Application and Submission Information

1. Address to Request Application Package.

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

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

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

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

☐ **Uniform Grant Application** in fillable PDF format
- Signature page must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
  - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
  - Can be signed digitally

☐ **Uniform Budget** utilizing the template provided by DCEO for this project
- The entire Excel document with all the tabs included, even if the tabs are not relevant to the grant opportunity, must be submitted
- Do not send a restricted version of the Uniform Budget
- Certification page must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
  - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
  - Can be signed digitally

☐ **Conflict of Interest Disclosure**
- Conflict of Interest Disclosure must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
  - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
  - Can be signed digitally

☐ **Mandatory Disclosure**
- Mandatory Disclosure must be signed by the authorized signatory before submission
  - Can be printed, signed, and scanned
  - Can be signed digitally

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also requires the submission of the following other programmatic specific items as part of a program application:

☐ Guided Program Application. Complete the Climate Works Guided Program Application available on the NOFO webpage.

☐ Project Work Plan. Complete the Climate Works Project Workplan in the excel workbook that includes the following tabs

☐ **Attachment 1:Project Summary.** A brief narrative summary of the project, the organizations delivering it, the region and communities served, and the proposed training locations, with a summary of the total activity and outcome figures entered in Attachment

☐ **Attachment 2: Activities and Outcomes**. Projected outreach, service delivery, participant characteristics, and transition outcomes, by quarter and cumulatively. Competitive proposals will clearly articulate how the activities funded under this NOFO will significantly increase participation of underserved populations in registered apprenticeship programs in Illinois.

☐ **Attachment 3: Curriculum Plan.** An outline of the chosen curricula, including the NABTU or NCCER core, clean energy content, OSHA-10, First Aid/CPR, employability skills, test taking, work-based learning, and any additional training or credentials the applicant plans to offer, with estimated instructional hours for each module and the delivery format, logistics, and prerequisites.

☐ **Attachment 4: Staffing Plan.** How program services and instruction will be delivered and by whom, for both grantee and partner organizations, across the required key staff roles.

☐ **Attachment 5: Timeline.** Start-up activities and program delivery activities, with the staff responsible, the month, and the deliverable or milestone for each, covering recruitment, enrollment, instruction, and transition.

☐ **Resumes and/or Job Descriptions:** Grant applications must include the resumes of key staff and instructor positions that will need to be filled using Program funds. Include a job description for each position and individual qualifications sought for each position.

☐ **Training Qualifications:** Grant applicants should include documentation to prove that the trainers are authorized to provide NABTU or NCCER training.

☐ **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) / Program Partners:** Grant applications should include MOUs and Partnership Agreements (as opposed to Letters of Support) with all key partners on the Applicant team detailing the entity's information, key staff information, roles and responsibilities associated with this project, and dollar amounts for specific services to be rendered.

☐ **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) / Employers:** Grant applications should include MOUs and Partnership Agreements (as opposed to Letters of Support) with from employers who agree to consider hiring program graduates and/or offer on-the- job training opportunities or work-based learning opportunities.

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.

Documents stored in Google Docs or other cloud-based servers are not allowed.

3. Submission Dates and Times

Applications for this opportunity must be submitted by October 30, 2026. If grantees in any CEJA Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Region are not awarded, this NOFO will remain open on a rolling basis for the regions not awarded until December 31, 2027.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at **https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/dd5ce61ccd1c4373bb0f564655c77618**.

The Department has 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.

4. Other Submission Requirements

The applicant can receive a copy of their submitted application by checking the "Send me a copy of my responses" box at the bottom of the application submission form.

Applicants may confirm receipt of the application and documents by contacting the program contact listed in this NOFO.

5. Freedom of Information Act/Confidential Information

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

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria

Grant proposals will be reviewed on a competitive basis. Each proposal will be scored on a 100% scale. The Department shall consider the following criteria when evaluating the application submittal: Need, Capacity, and Quality.

Criterion	Question #	Application question	Points	
CAPACITY	5	Registered apprenticeship and contractor partnerships	8	
	13	Your track record and administrative capacity	5	
	14	Your team across the required key program areas	8	
	15	Your equity-focused program culture and your roots in the communities you would serve	5	
	16	Your partner network and the local workforce system	6	
	18	Records, reporting, and continuous improvement	5	
		Capacity subtotal		**37**
NEED	1	The communities and populations you would serve, and how you would reach them	8	
	4	Regional apprenticeship and clean energy employer demand	3	
	7	Your service area, training locations, and access	3	
		Need subtotal		**14**
QUALITY	2	Prescreening, application, and intake	4	

	3	Priority of service and enrollment	3	
	6	Your curriculum	8	
	8	Your delivery model	3	
	9	Work-based learning and hands-on practice	5	
	10	Student support services	3	
	11	Barrier reduction services and stipends	4	
	12	Transition services and follow-up	4	
	17	Your proposed outcomes and twelve-month plan	3	
		Quality subtotal		**37**
COST EFFECTIVENESS	19	Your budget and stipends	8	
	20	Leverage, efficiency, and sustainability	4	
		Cost Effectiveness subtotal		**12**
		TOTAL		**100**

2. Feedback

Applicants may be provided with feedback focused on the required technical changes to their application package as part of the Department's administrative review - prior to final merit review being conducted. The Department will provide applicants with a short timeline (typically 1-2 business days) to resubmit the application to remedy technical submission errors or omissions. This feedback is limited to the technical application requirements and applicants are not allowed to make substantive changes to the application and attachments.

3. Review and Selection Process

Applications will be graded using the Merit Review Process and scored on the criteria specified in Section E.1. The Department will designate an Evaluation Committee to grade each application received for this funding opportunity. The final score of each Committee member will be calculated and an average of all scores will be the final applicant score. Grants will be awarded according to the following process: All applications will be sorted by proposed Climate Works Region. The highest scoring applications in each Climate Works Region that meet the NOFO requirements will be prioritized for funding. If none of the applications within an open region are recommended for funding, DCEO will accept and review new applications on a first come/first served basis. Grants will be awarded after a successful negotiation process with 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 per **https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/meritappreview.html**. 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 through the merit review appeal request form (**https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/6444bed39ef140c589f002f53b9bc092**) within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published.

4. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates

After the application period is closed, the Department will conduct a merit 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 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.

5. 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).

Business Enterprise Program: For grant awards of $250,000 or more, grantees will be required to comply with the Business Enterprise Program for Minorities, Females, and Persons with Disabilities Act (30 ILCS 575/0.01 *et seq*.), which establishes a goal for contracting with businesses that have been certified as owned and controlled by persons who are minority, female or who have disabilities. The Department will work with the grantees to ensure compliance prior to the establishment of the grant agreement as well as through the life of the grant.

6. Reporting.

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

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

Monitoring

Grantees funded through this NOFO are subject to fiscal and programmatic monitoring visits by the Department in accordance with 2 CFR 200.337. They must have an open-door policy allowing periodic

visits by Department monitors to evaluate the progress of the project and provide documentation upon request of the monitor. Program staff will also maintain contact with participants and monitor progress and performance of the contracts. The Department may modify grants based on performance.

Audit

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

Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Specific Reporting

Grantees will assist the Department to provide an annual report to the Illinois Works Review Panel by April 1 of each calendar year as required by the program statute, 20 ILCS 730/5-40(b) and rules 14 Ill. Admin. Code 850.50(j). The annual report shall include the following information:

- A description of the grantee's recruitment, screening, and training efforts, including a description of training related to construction and building trades opportunities in clean energy jobs;
- The number of individuals who apply to, participate in, and complete the Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship program, broken down by race, gender, age, geography and veteran status;
- Referring to those who participated in and completed the Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program, the number of individuals who are initially accepted and placed into apprenticeship programs in the construction and building trades, broken down by race, gender, age, geography and veteran status;
- Referring to those who participated in and completed the Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program, the number of individuals who remain in apprenticeship programs in the construction and building trades or have become journeymen one calendar year after their placement, broken down by race, gender, age, geography and veteran status.

G. State Awarding Agency Contact

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

H. Other Information

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

Please visit the following website for instructional videos that guide applicants through each step of applying for and administering a grant:
(**https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/learning-library.html**)

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

Questions and Answers: Applicants may submit questions about this NOFO to ceo.ceja@illinois.gov Answers to questions will be posted on the NOFO webpage at: **Illinoisworknet.com/climateworksnofo2027.**

NOFO Technical Assistance: DCEO will provide Technical Assistance (TA) throughout the application process, in the form of webinars and FAQ. More information will be posted at the NOFO webpage at: **Illinoisworknet.com/climateworksnofo2027.**

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

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

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

This checklist outlines the required documents that must be uploaded to the DCEO application Smartsheet at: **https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/dd5ce61ccd1c4373bb0f564655c77618** by **October 30, 2026** to be reviewed in this application round.

Applications that are **submitted by October 16, 2026** will have the administrative review completed by **October 23, 2026** to verify that the application meet the minimum administrative requirements.

- ☐ Uniform Grant Application **[PDF FORM]**
- ☐ Uniform Budget **[EXCEL FILE and PDF]** Conflict of Interest Disclosure **[PDF FORM]**
- ☐ Mandatory Disclosures **[PDF FORM]**
- ☐ Guided Program Application **[WORD NARRATIVE]**
- ☐ Project Work Plan containing the following required attachments (tabs) **[EXCEL FILE]**
    - Attachment 1 – Project Summary
    - Attachment 2 – Activities and Outcomes
    - Attachment 3 – Curriculum Plan
    - Attachment 4 – Staffing Plan
    - Attachment 5 – Timeline
- ☐ Resumes and/or Job Descriptions **[PDF]**
- ☐ Training Qualification Documentation to prove that the trainers are authorized to provide NABTU or NCCER training **[PDF]**
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding / Partnership Agreements – *Program Partners* **[PDF]**
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding / Partnership Agreements - *Employers* **[PDF]**

BUDGET APPENDIX: This appendix provides applicants with practical guidance for developing, presenting, and justifying the CEJA grant budget. Applicants should use this guidance together with the program requirements and application instructions in the NOFO. A well-developed budget should clearly demonstrate how requested funds will be used to achieve the proposed project's objectives and deliver measurable results. Each budget item should be reasonable, necessary, allowable, and adequately supported by the accompanying budget narrative.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS: Applicants should develop their budgets using the following principles:

1. *Align the Budget with the Project*: The budget should directly support the activities, outcomes, deliverables, and timeline described in the application. Reviewers should be able to understand the connection between:
    - Project Activities → Resources Needed → Costs → Expected Results
    - Applicants should avoid including costs that are not clearly connected to the proposed project.
2. *Be Reasonable and Necessary:* Each cost should be reasonable for the goods or services being purchased and necessary to accomplish the proposed work.
    - Applicants should use realistic estimates based on current market conditions, organizational experience, historical costs, vendor quotations, salary schedules, or other appropriate documentation.
3. *Follow Applicable Cost Requirements*: Applicants are responsible for ensuring that proposed costs comply with all applicable requirements. Costs should generally be:
    - Allowable under the NOFO;
    - Necessary for the proposed project;
    - Reasonable and appropriately priced;
    - Consistent with the applicant's established policies and practices;
    - Appropriately allocated to the project; and
    - Supported by sufficient documentation.
4. *Answer Budget Questions*: The budget narrative should explain and justify the costs included in the budget. It should not simply repeat the numbers shown in the budget table. For each major cost category, applicants should explain:
    - What is being purchased or funded;
    - Why it is needed;
    - How the cost was calculated;
    - Who will perform the work, when relevant; and
    - How the cost supports the proposed project.
5. *Common Errors to Avoid*: Applicants should carefully review their budgets for the following common problems:
    - Insufficient Detail
    - Unsupported Costs
    - Inconsistent Information
    - Mathematical Errors
    - Unallowable Costs
    - Excessive or Unnecessary Costs
    - Missing Personnel Effort
    - Unclear Consultant Costs
    - Incorrect Indirect Cost Calculation
    - Budget Does Not Support the Work Plan

CEJA CLIMATE WORKS PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Applicants are encouraged to connect the CEJA grant costs with the major project activities. The budget should demonstrate a clear relationship between the budget and the number of program participants that will be enrolled, trained and placed. The following table provides grantees with general guidance regarding baseline activity and outcome service level expectations for Climate Works hubs. Please note that the size of the Climate Works Hub generally depends on the projected number of registered apprenticeship openings and other placements.

Table 1: Service and Outcome Level Baseline Expectations

PARTICIPANTS	SMALL HUB	AVERAGE HUB	LARGE HUB
ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS TOTAL (Annual)	125	250	400
COMPLETERS: PREAPPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM (Annual)	88	175	335
OUTCOMES: TOTAL	55-70	110-150	210-275
OUTCOMES: RAP Applicants/Waitlisted (60-80% of Training Participants)	25-35	50-70	100-130
OUTCOMES: RAP Placements (60-80% of Participants)	7-10	14-20	25-35
OUTCOMES: Job Placements in Construction (60-80% of Participants)	7-10	14-20	25-35
OUTCOMES: Advanced Training Placement (60-80% of Participants)	7-10	14-20	25-35

Table 2 provides applicants with general guidance regarding the major budget categories or "cost objectives" that are associated with administering the CEJA Climate Works Program. The major cost objectives include *Income Supports, Supportive Services, and Training Delivery / Program Administration.* Please note that cost per program participant will generally depend on the length / complexity of the training program and the program outcomes / job placements.

Table 2 Participant Cost by Cost Objective – General Guidelines

COST OBJECTIVE / COST PER PARTICIPANT	SHORT PROGRAM	AVERAGE PROGRAM	EXTENDED PROGRAM
INCOME SUPPORT (STIPENDS/INCENTIVES)	$4000 (250 Hrs)	$4500 (300 Hrs)	$5000 (350 Hrs)
BARRIER REDUCTION / PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION COST	$3500	$4000	$4800
TRAINING COST / PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION COST	$6000	$6500	$7000

Table 3 provides applicants with general guidance regarding the total costs associated with administering an average to extended length CEJA Climate Works program.

Table 3 Total Program Cost Projections – General Guidelines

	SMALL HUB (125 Enrolled)	AVERAGE HUB (250 Enrolled)	LARGE HUB (400 Enrolled)
TOTAL GRANT	$2.5-$3 Million	$4-$4.5 Million	$5.5-6.5 Million

BUDGET REVIEW CHECKLIST

Before submitting an application, applicants should verify the following:

- The total budget does not exceed the maximum award amount.
- All proposed costs are allowable under the Funding Opportunity.
- Each significant cost is necessary to accomplish the proposed project.
- Costs are reasonable and based on credible estimates.
- Personnel calculations include appropriate salaries or wages and levels of effort.
- Fringe benefits are calculated using an appropriate rate and methodology.
- Travel costs include sufficient detail to demonstrate reasonableness.
- Equipment costs are appropriately classified and justified.
- Supplies and materials are linked to project activities.
- Contractual costs identify the services to be provided and the basis for the estimate.
- Indirect costs comply with applicable requirements.
- The budget narrative explains the purpose and calculation of significant costs.
- Budget totals reconcile across all application components.
- The budget supports the proposed work plan and timeline.
- No cost is duplicated across budget categories or funding sources.
- The final budget has been reviewed for mathematical and typographical errors.