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 Energy Transition Navigators Program (CEJA)
CSFA Number	420-30-3174
CSFA Popular Name	Illinois Energy Transition Navigators Program (CEJA)
Anticipated Number of Awards	16
Estimated Total Program Funding	$6,500,000
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Indirect Costs Allowed	Yes
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
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Technical Assistance Session	Offered : Yes Mandatory : No Date : 09/29/2026 : 10:00 AM Registration link : https://illinoisstate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_eBkidr0FRVuS-xh2ReMqGg#/registration

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Illinois Energy Transition Navigators Program 2027

NOFO ID: 3174-4344

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 support the Illinois Energy Transition Navigators Program. The goal is to establish a network of community-based providers across the State of Illinois. These providers will offer community education, outreach, and recruitment services to encourage eligible individuals to participate in clean energy workforce and contractor development programs**.**

2. Program History

The Energy Transition Navigators Program began under a series of Notices of Funding Opportunity that established Navigator Teams in CEJA workforce regions across the State. This NOFO refers to those awards as Cycle 1. Cycle 1 built the initial statewide Navigator network and established demand for outreach, recruitment, and career navigation services in equity investment eligible communities. This NOFO opens Cycle 2. The Department will award Energy Transition Navigator grants to serve the CEJA workforce regions listed under Navigator locations funded below.

To provide more clarity about the relationship between Navigator Teams and the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (Workforce Hubs), Cycle 2 defines the Navigator role more specifically than Cycle 1 did. In Cycle 1, Navigator Teams and Workforce Hubs operating in the same region each conducted outreach, intake, and eligibility screening. The division of responsibility for case management, barrier reduction administration, and foundational training varied by region. In several regions the Workforce Hub contracted one or more of these functions to its Navigator partner. Cycle 2 recognizes this arrangement as a best practice. These Workforce Hub responsibilities may be performed by its staff or contracted to a partner, including its Navigator partner.

The relationship between Navigator Teams and the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program does not change significantly in Cycle 2. Climate Works conducts its own recruitment and retains its own application and selection process. A Navigator Team may recruit for Climate Works where a Climate Works training location operates in its region.

Cycle 2 changes the Navigator service delivery model for Workforce Hub participants in three respects.

- **Single point of entry.** The Navigator Team serves as the single point of entry to the Workforce Hub in its region. A participant applies, is screened for eligibility and completes intake with the Navigator.
- **Defined responsibilities.** This NOFO states the Navigator responsibilities that apply in every region. Workforce Hubs are responsible for Case Management, Barrier Reduction administration, and delivery of CEJA Core Competencies training. A Workforce Hub may contract any or all of them to its Navigator partner.

- **Post-award planning period.** Each Navigator grantee participates in a post-award planning period with the Department and the applicable Workforce Hub before services begin. The planning period sets the joint work plan, service volumes, and participant handoffs.

3. Program Description

This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) sets forth the requirements for funding for the Energy Transition Navigators Program (20 ILCS 730/5-35; 14 Ill. Admin. Code 820), as specified by the Energy Transition Act as part of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, PA 102-0662 ("Climate and Equitable Jobs Act" or CEJA"). Investments in clean energy technology and infrastructure, funded through CEJA and other state and federal programs, will offer numerous employment and business development opportunities for the residents of Illinois. Historically, these types of opportunities have not always been available to some populations and communities. CEJA establishes various programs and expands existing programs aimed at accelerating the adoption of clean energy sources, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency efforts.

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 are intended to equitably grow the clean energy workforce by serving equity investment eligible communities and equity investment eligible people (defined below).

The Energy Transition Navigators Program provides outreach, recruitment, and entry services for the CEJA workforce and contractor programs. The Department seeks to grant funds to not-for-profit community-based providers ("Navigator Teams") to perform this function in each CEJA workforce region. Navigator Teams will conduct outreach and recruitment among eligible populations to ensure they are aware of and engaged in the statewide and local workforce and contractor development programs.

Navigator Teams will also serve as the single point of entry to the Workforce Hub in their region. In that role, Navigator Teams will screen individuals for eligibility, assist with applications, complete intake, conduct the required pre-assessments, provide career exploration orientation, and refer participants to training or employment. Navigator Teams do not deliver Workforce Hub training, unless a Workforce Hub subcontracts this work to the Navigator grantee. Navigator Teams will prioritize the recruitment of individuals eligible for the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Programs. Navigator Teams are expected to have the ability to refer individuals to other workforce, education and supportive service programs based on an assessment of the individuals' needs.

To ensure that people are fully able to participate in these two workforce programs, Navigator Teams complete the Service Needs Assessment in the CEJA Reporting System that identifies what a participant needs in order to succeed in these programs and connect participants to supports that address those needs. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program services (20 ILCS 730/5-30) include tools, mentoring, travel stipends, work clothes, certifications, childcare, and other support services. Administration of Barrier Reduction funds is a Workforce Hub responsibility, which a Workforce Hub may contract to its Navigator partner.

Additionally, Navigator Teams will engage eligible individuals to participate in the following programs:

- **Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program** (20 ILCS 730/5-45). Provides training, mentorship, low-cost capital, business planning, low-interest loans, and recruitment opportunities for small clean energy businesses and contractors.

- **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 energy projects through a structured five-year program with mentorship, operation support grants, business coaching, assistance applying for certifications, procurement programs, and preparing bids.
- **Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program** (20 ILCS 730/5-50). Prepares individuals in the custody of the Illinois Department of Corrections who are within 36 months of release for clean energy employment. Recruitment and training for this program happen within correctional facilities. Following participants' release, Navigator Teams connect participants and completers of the program to the CEJA workforce and contractor programs.

CEJA Energy Transition Navigators will provide outreach and recruitment services (including activities and events) to eligible populations in the 14 regional workforce hubs and surrounding areas. Outreach and recruitment will be prioritized for those eligible to participate in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program. Note that the Department may award multiple grants to Navigator Teams in a workforce hub region.

If the Workforce Hub site is not physically located within the Workforce Hub municipality listed on page 8 of this NOFO, then the applicant must demonstrate that the Workforce Hub site is geographically "near" and readily accessible to individuals within the Workforce Hub municipality. Navigator Teams will partner with the organizations that manage the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (Workforce Hub) and the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program in their region. The two relationships are different.

For the Workforce Hub, the Navigator Team serves as the single point of entry. The Navigator Team conducts outreach and recruitment, screens individuals for eligibility, assists with the participant application, completes intake, conducts the required pre-assessments, provides career exploration orientation, and refers the participant to the Workforce Hub. The Workforce Hub delivers the Career Cluster and Career Pathway training, and administers participant stipends. The two organizations coordinate on referrals, assessment results, participant information, and any Workforce Hub responsibility the Hub contracts to the Navigator Team.

- Regional capacity varies across the CEJA workforce regions. Case management, Barrier Reduction administration, and delivery of CEJA Core Competencies training are Workforce Hub responsibilities and are budgeted in the Workforce Hub grant. A Workforce Hub may perform them with its own staff or contract them to a partner, including its Navigator partner. Several regions operated this way in Cycle 1. A Navigator Team that wants to perform any of these functions describes its interest and capacity in Attachment 5, which the Department provides to the Workforce Hub after award.
- The Department will convene the Navigator grantee and the applicable Workforce Hub in a post-award planning period that will not exceed three months. In that period the partners will confirm their responsibilities, agree on the training capacity plan and the referral plan that follows from it, determine how participant handoffs will occur, and produce a joint project work plan. Where a Workforce Hub proposes to contract case management, Barrier Reduction administration, or delivery of CEJA Core Competencies training to its Navigator partner, the planning period is where that arrangement is confirmed and budgeted. The Department will decide where the partners do not agree. A responsibility that moves from the Workforce Hub to the Navigator Team reaches it through a Workforce Hub subcontract and is paid from the Workforce Hub grant.

The Navigator Team's relationship with the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program differs from its relationship with the Workforce Hub. Navigator Teams provide outreach, recruitment, program

information, reasonable assistance with the application, and referral. Climate Works Hubs remain responsible for recruiting, and providing pre-apprenticeship training to its participants. The single point of entry requirement that applies to the Workforce Hub does not apply to Climate Works Hubs. However, Navigators are expected to coordinate with Climate Works grantees on recruitment activities paid by CEJA Climate Works grant.

Outreach and recruitment efforts will include providing information and consultation to eligible individuals on various training opportunities and supportive services available through CEJA and other statewide and local workforce development programs. Navigator Teams will support those applying for these programs and help them access Energy Transition Barrier Reduction services. They will provide guidance to these individuals on training and career opportunities in the emerging clean energy economy.

In coordination with the organizations that administer the Clean Jobs Workforce Network and the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Programs in their region, Navigator Teams will refer individuals to local American Job Centers and other relevant organizations, if those individuals are not interested in the CEJA workforce and contractor programs.

Together with the teams that manage the Clean Jobs Workforce Network and Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Programs in their region, Navigator Teams will engage with local employers, industry leaders, and unions to identify the skill and hiring needs of the local clean energy industry. This information will be used to prioritize training program offerings, curricular modifications, career pathway support, and job placement for eligible individuals.

The Navigator Teams will also direct individuals interested in starting or growing their business to the Clean Energy Contractor Incubator and the Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Programs in their region. These programs provide services including, but not limited to, business consulting, business planning, regulatory compliance, marketing, training, accessing capital, government bid and certification assistance. Navigator Teams will also help to connect people with local Small Business Development Centers and APEX Accelerators (formerly known as "Procurement Technical Assistance Centers"). Navigator Teams should also be well connected to other workforce and business development centers, including but not limited to:

- Illinois Small Business Development Centers: (**https://dceo.illinois.gov/smallbizassistance/beginhere/sbdc.html**) provide information, confidential business guidance, training, and other resources for start-ups and existing small businesses.
- APEX Accelerators (formerly known as "Procurement Technical Assistance Centers"): (**https://dceo.illinois.gov/smallbizassistance/beginhere/ptac.html**) are a portal for small businesses looking to enter the world of government contracting. They provide one-on-one counseling, technical information, marketing assistance and training to existing businesses interested in selling their goods and services to local, state, and/or federal government agencies.
- American Jobs Centers: (**https://www.illinoisworknet.com/Connect/Pages/LocationSearch.aspx**) help people search for jobs, find training, and answer other employment related questions.
- Regional or local economic development organizations.
- Regional or local workforce innovation boards.

ILLINOIS CLEAN ENERGY WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The Energy Transition Navigators 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 program participants in the clean energy workforce. By providing training, employment, and career development, the Energy Transition Navigators Program will help to increase and sustain prosperity in all communities.

The CEJA Ecosystem
The Energy Transition Navigators 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 Equity Investment Eligible Communities as defined on page 7 of this NOFO

Illinois Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act State Plan
The Energy Transition Navigators 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.

PROGRAM COORDINATION
The Energy Transition Navigator Network Program is part of a highly interconnected set of Illinois statewide clean energy workforce and contractor development programs. The CEJA Navigators will be required to collaborate and coordinate with the programs listed below. In particular, the Energy Transition Navigators Program is closely coupled with the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, as described in this NOFO. Navigators will be required to operate with an exceptionally high level of coordination and collaboration with the Workforce Hubs in their region to ensure a seamless experience of referral, enrollment, and training for participants. In addition to the coordination with the CEJA Workforce Hubs, the Navigators are required to work with other program that are operating within the Workforce Hub regions including, but not limited to:

- Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program **https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/workforce-training-programs.html#clean-jobs**
- Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program: **https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/workforce-training-programs.html#climate-works**
- Returning Residents Clean Jobs Program: **https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/workforce-training-programs.html#returning-resident**

- Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program: **https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/ceja-contractor-programs.html#1**
- Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program: **https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/ceja-contractor-programs.html#2**
- Future Energy Jobs Act Programs: **https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/workforce-training-programs.html#solar-training**

PROGRAM DEFINITIONS

This NOFO uses the definitions established in the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, including the Energy Transition Navigators Program statute and rules, for “Community-based provider,” "Equity investment eligible person," " Equity investment eligible community," and “Equity focused population”.

“Community-based provider” is a not-for-profit organization that has a history of serving low-wage or low-skilled workers or individuals from economically disadvantaged communities.

"Displaced energy worker" means an energy worker who has lost employment, or is anticipated by the Grantor 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.

"Economically disadvantaged community" means areas of one or more census tracts where the average household income does not exceed 80% of the area median income for the relevant county or counties based on data published most recently by the Secretary of the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development.

"Eligible populations" means those individuals who meet the requirements to participate in CEJA workforce training and contractor programs listed in the Energy Transition Act (20 ILCS 730) and to whom Energy Transition Navigators will direct their efforts pursuant to the Program, including, but not limited to, individuals in equity focused populations and economically disadvantaged communities.

"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, 20 ILCS 735 (September 15, 2021), whichever is later.

“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.

"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 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.

Navigator Teams will recruit equity investment eligible persons, among other eligible populations, to participate in the CEJA workforce programs. Note that specific eligibility requirements vary by program and Grantee's Navigator Team is expected to know all CEJA program eligibility requirements for purposes of recommending individuals as participants.

“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; 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 Focused Populations" means*:*

- 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;
- 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.

"Not-for-profit 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 and provides services directly to low-income individuals or low-skilled workers.

CEJA CLEAN JOBS WORKFORCE HUB REGIONS

This NOFO will award grants to fund CEJA Navigators located in, or near each of the following CEJA Clean Jobs Workforce Hub regions:

- Chicago (South)
- Chicago (Southwest and West)
- Waukegan
- Rockford
- Aurora
- Joliet
- Peoria
- Champaign
- Danville
- Decatur
- Carbondale
- East St. Louis
- Alton
- Kankakee

Each CEJA Navigator Team will serve participants in its proposed hub municipality and surrounding areas, including nearby regions. For instance, the Peoria workforce region may propose to serve participants in Peoria and Bloomington-Normal. Applicants must identify the workforce region they propose to serve.

Chicago regions. The Chicago (South) and Chicago (Southwest and West) regions may each support more than one Energy Transition Navigator and more than one Workforce Hub. Where that occurs, the Department will pair each Navigator Team with a Workforce Hub grantee after applicants are designated as finalists, so that each pair operates as a bilateral partnership as in every other region. Applicants in these regions apply as they would anywhere else and are not asked to identify a Workforce Hub partner in the application.

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY

The Energy Transition Navigators are responsible for the recruitment and assessment of the CEJA Workforce Hub Program Participants. The focus of the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program is to prepare program-eligible participants to successfully gain employment in the clean energy industry.

The Energy Transition Navigators are also responsible for the recruitment and referral CEJA Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program participants that operate in their Workforce Hub Region. The focus of the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program and the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program is to help eligible individuals 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.

The participant eligibility for the Climate Works Program is the same as the CEJA Workforce Hub Program. To be eligible, 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. Note that eligible participants will complete an assessment process to make sure that the program is suitable to meet the eligible participant's needs and career objectives.

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.

PRIORITY OF SERVICE

The Energy Transition Navigator Team applies priority of service at outreach, screening, and referral. The Workforce Hub and/or CEJA Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Center applies it at enrollment and placement. The Navigator Team meets its part by composing referrals so that the Workforce Hub can meet the placement priorities outlined below, where possible.

Where the applicant pool allows, placements in the CEJA workforce programs are prioritized as follows. In each CEJA workforce region:

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.
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. Because the two-thirds in item 2 includes the one-third in item 1, up to one-third of placements remain available for item 3. Priority of service governs placement. It does not govern eligibility. A person who falls into none of these tiers may still be eligible under PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY above.

The Department recognizes that not all of the CEJA workforce regions will have a significant number of individuals who reside in R3 or environmental justice communities. Navigator Teams will be required to describe their priority of service considerations in outreach and recruitment policy and procedures

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The focus of the Energy Transition Navigator Program is: 1) to provide outreach and community education to eligible populations to raise awareness of opportunities to participate in CEJA programs, with priority to individuals eligible for the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program; 2) to provide services to assist those individuals with enrollment and participation in those programs; and 3) to engage with diverse community, employer, and workforce stakeholders to effectively reflect both the opportunities and the needs of the emerging regional clean energy economy. Projects funded under this program must include the following program elements:

I. **EQUITY-FOCUSED PROGRAM DESIGN**: Navigator Teams must provide information about how they will work to increase the participation of equity investment eligible persons and communities in the CEJA workforce programs and connect them to the barrier reduction services offered by these programs. Navigator Teams must outline specific strategies for how to foster a welcoming, inclusive environment. The focus on equity should go beyond numeric participant targets and focus on all aspects of program design and partnerships. Because Navigator Teams administer the assessments that determine readiness for training, applicants must describe how they will provide an equitable and accessible assessment experience. This includes accommodations, language access, disability access, and the use of approved alternative methods where an individual cannot be fairly assessed by the standard instrument.

   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. Navigator Teams apply an equity lens by examining who reaches the program and who does not, what barriers explain the difference, barriers to enrolling in training, and then changing program delivery in response. Applicants demonstrate an equity lens through experience rather than intent. 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.

II. **GEOGRAPHIC COVERAGE**: Navigator Teams must identify and provide services in one of the 14 regional workforce hubs of the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program. Applicants should explain how they intend to reach all communities in the hub locations, as well as nearby regions. For instance, a team serving the Decatur hub could also propose to serve Springfield.

III. **OUTREACH & RECRUITMENT**: Applicants must outline comprehensive recruitment and outreach strategies to engage eligible populations, prioritizing individuals eligible for the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program.
   a) Outreach strategies should ensure that eligible populations are aware of and engaged in the statewide and local workforce development systems.

b) Where a Climate Works training location operates in the Navigator Team's region, the Navigator Team may coordinate with the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program to recruit eligible participants and assess participant eligibility.
c) As the single point of entry to the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, Navigator Teams will recruit and screen individuals for eligibility.
d) Navigator Teams may conduct outreach and recruitment strategies that include but are not limited to presentations, class visits, career fairs, open houses, or other activities hosted by the grantee or in partnership with another organization.
e) Navigator Teams should work with regional educational institutions, organizations working with eligible populations, local employers, and labor unions to identify individuals who are unable to advance their careers due to inadequate skills or other barriers and help connect them to workforce and contractor programs
f) Navigator Teams will raise awareness of the CEJA workforce and contractor development programs in the region by providing information about these programs to organizations working with eligible populations, local workforce innovation boards, and other relevant stakeholders.
g) The Department and the Illinois Department of Corrections jointly conduct activities to support recruitment of eligible candidates to the CEJA workforce programs, consistent with Section 5-8A-4.2 of the Unified Code of Corrections, 20 ILCS 730/5-20(f-5), 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. Navigator Teams must be prepared to receive and act on candidate referrals arising from that process, to complete the screening, intake, assessment, orientation, and referral process for those candidates, and to coordinate with the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program where a candidate is served by both.
h) Each Navigator Team’s outreach and recruitment policy and procedures will be required to describe the priority of service considerations outlined above.

IV. **SINGLE POINT OF ENTRY, SCREENING, APPLICATION, AND INTAKE**: Navigator Teams serve as the single point of entry to the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program in their region. Applicants must describe how they will receive, screen, and refer individuals seeking to participate. A person seeking the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program may first make contact with the Navigator Team, the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, a community partner, or a publicity source. Regardless of where first contact occurs, the Navigator Team is responsible for the process from first contact through referral to the Workforce Hub. Navigator Teams will assist potential participants who wish to enroll in the programs. This includes support with participants' program applications, participant pre-screening to make sure they meet eligibility requirements, and completion of intake.

Navigator Teams will be required to use materials and methods for application and intake, which will be provided. These required materials and methods include pre-screening assessments and interview questions; program applications; wrap-around service assessments; and commitment agreements. Eligibility screening and participant assessment are distinct steps.

- Eligibility screening determines whether an individual meets the residence and program requirements for the program to which they will be referred.

- Assessment determines readiness and pathway suitability, and follows eligibility screening. The requirements for assessment are described below.

Navigator Teams will create and maintain a participant record in the CEJA Reporting System and will document the information required by the Department's eligibility and data requirements. Eligibility documentation is uploaded to the CEJA Reporting System. Documentation loaded once follows the participant to the training program, so a participant supplies it only one time

Note that this “single point of entry” requirement does not apply to the CEJA Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program or other workforce programs that the Navigator Team may refer individuals to participate in.

V. **ASSESSMENT, ORIENTATION, AND REFERRAL**: Before referring a participant to the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, Navigator Teams will complete the required pre-assessments, assess readiness and suitability, and provide career exploration orientation. Applicants must describe how they will perform each of these functions.

Assessment. The 2027-2029 Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework (the "Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework") requires a set of pre-assessments before a participant begins CEJA Core Competencies training. Navigator Teams complete three of these before referral. The fourth is completed after enrollment by the entity that delivers the CEJA Core Competencies training.

- Needs assessment. Identifies the wrap-around supports the participant needs to attend and complete training. Completed by the Navigator Team before referral.
- Reading and math assessment. Establishes the participant's reading and math level against the entry requirements for training. Completed by the Navigator Team before referral. The Navigator Team may administer this assessment directly or arrange it through a qualified partner.
    - The reading and math assessment uses an approved instrument, such as the Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE) 13 & 14 or Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment (CASAS) GOALS, and is administered consistent with current Illinois Community College Board guidance on approved instruments, administration procedures, and assessor qualifications.
    - Where a Navigator Team arranges the reading and math assessment through a partner, the Navigator Team remains responsible for obtaining the result, recording it, and using it in the referral decision.
- Career assessment. Explores the participant's interest in clean energy jobs. Where a participant decides not to pursue training, the results support a referral to a program or resource that better matches their interests or skills. Completed by the Navigator Team before referral as part of the career exploration orientation.
- CEJA Core Competencies proficiency assessment. Measures proficiency in the training content and determines whether the participant may test out of part or all of it. Completed after enrollment by the entity that delivers the CEJA Core Competencies training. That is assigned to the Clean Jobs Workforce Hub, unless the Workforce Hub has contracted delivery to the Navigator Team.

Navigator Teams will use the standard instruments and questionnaires approved by the Department and will not substitute a local instrument without the Department’s approval. Navigator Teams must maintain the staff, systems, and capacity to complete the required pre-

assessments, including any administrator training or licensing the approved reading and math instrument requires. Navigator Teams will record assessment results in the CEJA Reporting System and will coordinate results with the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program.

Navigator Teams will use pre-assessment results to recommend job placement, training focus areas, or career pathway support as needed. The Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework sets the entry level for CEJA Core Competencies at a 6th grade reading and math level. The Navigator Team assesses each participant against that level before referral. Some Career Pathways require an 8th grade reading and math level, which the participant must reach by the time the CEJA Core Competencies are complete. Navigator Teams will maintain current knowledge of the entry levels the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework sets for the Career Pathways their regional Workforce Hub offers.

Where a participant has not yet reached the 6th grade level, the Navigator Team will refer the participant to tutoring, adult education, or another appropriate provider, arrange re-assessment, and support program entry once the participant meets the requirement. An academic gap leads to a referral to an existing provider. Where no funded provider is available and the Navigator Team has documented that other sources have been pursued and are unavailable, Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program funds may pay for the prerequisite service as the payer of last resort. This is not an expected cost, and Barrier Reduction funds may not be used to build a standing basic-skills program

Orientation. Navigator Teams will provide a career exploration orientation to each participant after assessment and before referral to the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program. The orientation must cover three content areas:

- Clean energy careers and the work involved, presented broadly enough that participants can compare their own interests against the range of actual jobs in the sector;
- Employers and representatives of contractor development programs as speakers;
- An overview of the workforce programs, services, pathways, and resources available to the participant as next steps.

Note that the career exploration orientation provides participants with information about clean energy jobs. The orientation should not be designed as a clean energy basics training course. Navigator Teams will maintain current knowledge of the workforce programs, career pathways, employers, contractor development programs, and resources sufficient to deliver accurate orientation content, and will record orientation information in the CEJA Reporting System. Navigator teams should prioritize the programs and services that are available under the CEJA programs but must also provide applicants with information about other workforce programs and services including, but not limited to the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Programs.

Referral and placement. Navigator Teams will complete the intake, eligibility screening, assessment, and orientation stages before making a referral or placement. Navigator Teams will discuss next steps with the participant and make the referral or placement that fits the participant's eligibility, readiness, suitability, interests, and service needs. Supported destinations include but are not limited to:

- *The Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program*. The Navigator Team refers the participant, transferring the participant record and the pathway determination. The Clean Jobs

Workforce Network Program enrolls the participant when a seat is available and delivers the training or service for which it is responsible.

- *The Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program.* The Navigator Team connects interested individuals to Climate Works. Climate Works retains recruitment and pre-apprenticeship training duties. Where a Navigator Team refers a participant to Climate Works, the Navigator Team has determined eligibility before the referral. Specific roles are determined in the post-award planning period.
- *Direct employment, and Registered Apprenticeships*. The Navigator Team may place a work-ready participant directly into a job where the participant does not need further training. The Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework provides that pre-assessment results may also support transition into on-the-job training, a Registered Apprenticeship, or another work-based learning opportunity. The Navigator Team coordinates any such placement with the Workforce Hub and records it in the CEJA Reporting System.
- *CEJA contractor programs and employers.* Navigator Teams will also connect interested individuals to other workforce and business development center offerings, including the CEJA contractor programs described above, SBDC's APEX Accelerator Centers, and other contractors ready to hire CEJA graduates.
- *Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Program*. Where assessment indicates a readiness or prerequisite gap, the Navigator Team should make the appropriate external referral WIOA and other workforce development programs.

Navigator Teams will work closely with the program partners and providers to maintain a current working knowledge of the eligibility requirements, services, and offerings of each workforce program / provider before directing a participant to it and will provide reasonable application support and program information within the Navigator Team's role. Navigator Teams will create and maintain the participant's referral or placement record in the CEJA Reporting System.

Pathway determination. Navigator Teams will record a pathway determination for each participant referred to the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program. The pathway determination records the Career Cluster and Career Pathway to which the participant is referred, the pre-assessment results, the support needs identified in the needs assessment, and any indication that the participant may be a candidate for advanced training based on the participant's work history or an employer request. Navigator Teams must communicate the pathway determination is to the CEJA Workforce Hub. The pathway determination is not a career plan. The organization performing case management creates the participant's career plan after enrollment, using the pathway determination as its starting point. See WORKFORCE HUB RESPONSIBILITIES THAT MAY BE CONTRACTED TO A NAVIGATOR TEAM.

Note that the Navigator Team is not required to record a pathway determination for individuals that are referred to the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program or other workforces.

VI. **SUPPORTIVE SERVICES DURING INTAKE, ASSESSMENT, AND CAREER EXPLORATION**: Navigator Teams address the practical obstacles that keep a person from completing intake, sitting for the required pre-assessments, and attending career exploration orientation. Applicants may propose a budget and describe how they will perform this function. Applicants should size this budget against the service volume they propose under Budget Appendix and state the per-participant assumption used.

The support described here is limited to what a person needs to get through the Navigator's own process. Typical needs include transportation to an intake appointment, assessment, or orientation session; childcare for the hours of a scheduled session; fees for documents needed to establish eligibility or complete an application, such as identification, birth certificates, or transcripts; assessment or testing fees; and connectivity or device access needed to take part in a virtual session.

These costs are budgeted in the Navigator grant under the miscellaneous line item in the budget template. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program funds are not available to Navigators, other than the documented academic prerequisite described above. Navigator Teams may meet these needs directly, or by connecting the participant to an existing community resource. Where a Navigator Team makes a connection to an outside organization, it explains who determines eligibility at that destination and confirms the participant was served.

Where the needs assessment identifies a support need that will persist into training, the Navigator Team records it in the pathway determination so that it is communicated to the Hub with the referral rather than being addressed here. Supportive services that a participant needs while enrolled in training is provided through the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program that is administered by the CEJA training programs such as the Workforce Hub or Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program grantees. The Navigator Team may seek a subcontract from the Workforce Hub and/or Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program grantees to assist in the administration of supportive services and other program activities.

Please note that a readiness or academic gap is not a supportive service need under this section. It is addressed through assessment and referral to a tutoring, adult education, or other appropriate provider. Where no funded provider is available, the cost may be met through the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program as payer of last resort, on the terms stated under ASSESSMENT, ORIENTATION, AND REFERRAL

VII. **PROGRAM COORDINATION:** Navigator Teams will coordinate with the organizations that deliver the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program in the proposed region. Applicants must describe how they will establish and maintain these relationships.

Navigator Teams must clearly understand the eligibility requirements and each program's training and service offerings. Navigator Teams will maintain current knowledge of the services, offerings, and admission requirements of both programs throughout the funding period.

For the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, the Navigator Team serves as the single point of entry and performs the outreach, screening, application support, intake, assessment, orientation, and referral functions described above. Navigator Teams and the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program will coordinate on referrals, assessment results, participant information, participant handoffs, and any Workforce Hub responsibility contracted to the Navigator Team. Following the planning period, the joint project work plan governs the coordination responsibilities of both parties.

Demand planning. Workforce Hubs and Navigator Teams will plan training capacity together. The Workforce Hub determines the training capacity and proposes the plan. The Navigator Team has the recruitment obligation and agrees to it. Navigator Teams will:

- agree with the Workforce Hub to a referral plan derived from the Workforce Hub's training capacity plan, stating how many participants the Navigator Team will refer, by Career

Pathway and by period, cohort, or continuous intake, and how far in advance referrals must arrive for each start;

- conduct outreach, recruitment, and referral according to the agreed referral plan;
- notify the Workforce Hub promptly when recruitment is running ahead of or behind the referral plan;
- adjust outreach and referral activity when the Workforce Hub notifies the Navigator Team that planned capacity has filled, a start date has moved, or a Career Pathway has been added or suspended, and stop referring participants to a suspended Career Pathway;
- notify the Workforce Hub when a change in Navigator Team staffing or capacity will affect the outreach and recruitment plan, including the volume or timing of referrals the Workforce Hub can expect;
- review the plan on the cadence set by the joint project work plan, and agree revisions when enrollment, completion, or employer demand differ from the plan; and
- agree in advance with the Workforce Hub what will happen when referrals fall short of planned capacity or exceed it, including whether training runs under-filled, the start date moves, capacity shifts to a later start or another Career Pathway, or referrals are held for the next available opening.

The Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program may conduct its own outreach and recruitment and is not *required* to recruit through a Navigator Team.

- Where a Climate Works training location operates in a Navigator Team's region, the Navigator Team may recruit for Climate Works.
- The single point of entry requirement that applies to the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program does not apply to Climate Works. Where a Navigator Team recruits for Climate Works, the Navigator Team determines eligibility before referring the participant.
- Where Climate Works conducts its own outreach and intake, Climate Works determines eligibility.

Navigator Teams will coordinate with the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program Administrator serving their region on the referral and placement of program graduates.

Projected Services Levels: Applicants should use the participant service level ranges outlined in the Budget Appendix to assist in the development of this application. The Budget Appendix outlines general participant ranges and budget amounts based on the projected number of program participants. Navigator applicants should budget to recruit and place 100 participants in their local Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship program. Please note that the final service levels and budgets will be adjusted as part of the demand planning process that occurs during the grant negotiation process. Also note that there may be significant differences between the proposed participant service levels / budget and the final service levels / budget in the grant award based on the employer demand and training program capacity.

VIII. **WORKFORCE STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT:** Navigator Teams will maintain ongoing engagement with local employers, educational institutions, local economic development institutions, environmental justice organizations, trade groups, labor unions, local workforce innovation boards, and entities that provide jobs to identify the skill and hiring needs of the local clean energy industry.

- Navigator Teams will coordinate this engagement with the organizations that manage the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program in the region so that employers and other stakeholders are not approached separately by each program for the same purpose.
- Navigator Teams will work with local workforce innovation boards and other relevant partners on outreach coordination and career pathway support that meets local employer needs.
- Navigator Teams are encouraged bring employers and representatives of the CEJA contractor development programs into the career exploration orientation as speakers, and will maintain the employer relationships necessary to place work-ready participants directly into employment.

Applications should describe how the Navigator Team will establish relationships with these organizations, how these relationships will be maintained over the duration of the funding period, and how information derived from these relationships will inform recruitment and job placement efforts. Applications should also describe how the Navigator Team will share what it learns about regional skill and hiring needs with the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program to inform training program design.

IX. **WORKFORCE HUB RESPONSIBILITIES THAT MAY BE CONTRACTED TO A NAVIGATOR TEAM:** Case management, Barrier Reduction administration, and delivery of CEJA Core Competencies training are Workforce Hub and Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program responsibilities. They are budgeted in the Workforce Hub or the Climate Works grant. A Workforce Hub or Climate Works grantee may perform them with its own staff or contract them to a partner, including its Navigator partner. A Workforce Hub or Climate Works grantee *may* enter into a sub contractual agreement with a Navigator partner to provide the following services:

- Case management. Tracking each participant's progress through training and into employment, connects participants with the services they need to remain enrolled, and responds to problems that interrupt training. The Navigator Team could provide follow-up services to each participant for at least one year following completion of the training program. The Navigator Team would create the participant's career plan with the participant within 30 days of enrollment, using the pathway determination as its starting point, and maintains and amends it for the duration of the participant's participation. The career plan records the employment goal, the training sequence, the supports the participant will receive, and, where applicable, an advanced training path.
- Barrier Reduction administration. The Navigator Team could administer Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program funds under a subcontract from the Workforce Hub or Climate Works grantee, and those funds are paid from the Workforce Hub grant. The Navigator Team would follow the Workforce Hub or Climate Works grantee's Barrier Reduction Supportive Service policy and reporting procedures.
- Delivery of CEJA Core Competencies training. When subcontracted from the Workforce Hub, the Navigator Team delivers the full CEJA Core Competencies foundation, covering essential employability skills and/or clean energy basics as the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework defines those components. Required safety certifications are OSHA 10 and First Aid/CPR. Building science principles and construction basics are Career Cluster content and are not part of the CEJA Core Competencies. The Framework sets the competencies, the instructor qualifications, and the work-based learning requirement. At least ten percent of curriculum

instructional hours must be work-based learning. Those hours are added to the curriculum hour requirement rather than counted within it, and they are eligible for participant stipends. Where the Navigator Team delivers the CEJA Core Competencies, it also administers the CEJA Core Competencies proficiency assessment.

- Advanced training. Advanced training is training that falls outside the Career Pathways the Workforce Hub proposed, and it is funded through the Workforce Hub. Where the Navigator Team performs case management, it identifies participants for the advanced training track and records the path in the career plan. The Workforce Hub confirms the placement against the advanced training in its approved budget and project work plan and against the employer justification and obtains approval from its assigned Department Grant Manager and Regional Administrator. Training that runs beyond the 12-month program length is approved case by case through that same route. Before CEJA funds are used, the Navigator Team will confirm the participant has exhausted dislocated energy worker scholarship programs, financial aid, WIOA programs, and other available sources, and will document the employer justification, identifying the employer and the hiring or advancement opportunity the credential supports.

An applicant that wants to perform any of these responsibilities should complete Attachment 5. This Attachment is not scored as part of the merit review. It provides the Department with information to assist with the post-award planning, coordination and negotiation of CEJA workforce grants in each CEJA region. Please note that the completion of this attachment does not guarantee that Workforce Hub would subcontract any of these functions with the Navigator. A function becomes the Navigator Team's responsibility only when the joint project work plan, the budget, and the subcontract identify the responsible party, the scope of the work, and the funding grant. Until those documents are approved, no Navigator Team may perform or charge for the function. For each function the applicant is interested in, describe:

- the applicant's record of performing the function, including for whom and at what scale;
- the staff and systems the applicant would bring to it;
    - for case management, the caseload per staff member the proposed structure supports;
    - for Barrier Reduction administration, the fiscal controls adequate to administer participant-level expenditures, including separation of the approval and payment functions;
    - for delivery of CEJA Core Competencies training, instructional staff meeting the qualifications in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework and trained in equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility, employer relationships sufficient to provide work-based learning equal to at least ten percent of curriculum instructional hours, and access to appropriate instructional space; and
- the applicant's network of social service and community providers.

Applicants should not include these functions in the navigator budget that is submitted as a part of the application package of this NOFO.

X. **STAFFING:** Applicants must outline how the key program areas will be staffed to ensure quality delivery of programs and services. These key program areas include:

- Program administration. Administration of the Navigator grant, including compliance, reporting, daily operations, staff supervision, partner coordination, participation in the post-award planning period, and maintenance of the joint project work plan.
- Outreach and intake. marketing, outreach, and recruitment of individuals within eligible populations; eligibility screening; application assistance; intake; participant record maintenance; and required information sharing with partners.
- Assessment. Completion of the required pre-assessments and the readiness and suitability screening before referral, including any administrator training or licensing the approved reading and math instrument requires.
- Career guidance, orientation, referral, and placement. Provision of career guidance to members of eligible populations, delivery of the career exploration orientation, referrals, and support for direct placement of work-ready participants.
- Engagement with CEJA program administrators and regional stakeholders. Engagement with administrators of the CEJA workforce and contractor programs, and with regional business service centers, employers, workforce development centers, educational institutions, and unions to maintain functional knowledge of the workforce needs and skills development capabilities of these entities.
- Data entry, participant records, and reporting. Entry and maintenance of required participant records and reporting data in the CEJA Reporting System.

These key program areas and functions describe required areas of work. They do not require one employee per area and do not set job titles. A single person may hold more than one role, and partner organizations may share a role, provided the application demonstrates that the proposed team can deliver all required work. Staff must complete the training and authorization required by Department policy before performing assessment, data, fiscal, or participant service work that the Department controls.

In addition to these CEJA Program Staff roles, grantees will be required to assign qualified staff to complete the fiscal and administrative management requirements that are associated with administering a state grant.

Where a Workforce Hub contracts a responsibility to the Navigator Team, the Navigator Team will align its staffing plan and budget with the subcontract, and will update staffing and budget documents through the Department's change process when the subcontract or personnel change. Applicants will provide this information by completing Attachment 3: Staffing Plan and providing resumes or job descriptions of key staff assigned to the project.

XI. **PARTNERSHIPS:** The Navigator Team may enter into agreements with other partners to provide different program elements, such as outreach and recruitment or employer engagement. Evidence of partnerships should be demonstrated in memorandums of understanding (MOUs) and through line items in applicants' proposed budgets.

XII. **DATA TRACKING AND PROGRAM OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT:** Navigator Teams must describe the approach they will use to track demographic information for program participants, including outreach and engagement numbers, broken down by race, gender, age, and other criteria as directed by the Department; the number of individuals who apply to, participate in, and complete programs offered through the various CEJA workforce and contractor programs. Grantees will perform data tracking and use reporting systems as directed by DCEO.

Navigator Teams will enter and maintain participant records in the CEJA Reporting System. Navigator Teams will document each participant service event, including:

- the eligibility determination made at intake;
- the required pre-assessment results, including any reading and math result obtained through a partner;
- completion of the career exploration orientation;
- each referral or placement, identifying the destination, and each participant handoff; and
- where the Navigator Team administers Barrier Reduction funds under a Workforce Hub subcontract, each approved expense and the participant need it addresses.

Navigator Teams must also describe an approach to assess the effectiveness of the outreach and recruitment efforts and how this information will be used to improve outreach and engagement efforts in a continuous manner. Grant recipients will also be 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 NOFO.

5. Allowable and Unallowable Activities

The Department will provide grant funding for all allowable activities that are consistent with the CEJA 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 CEJA 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 Energy Transition Navigators Program are at 14 Ill. Adm. Code 820.

10. Performance Goals and Measures

There are a number of program activities, performance goals, and outcomes metrics that applicants must describe in the guided application and attachments, including but not limited to:

- A description of the Navigator Team's outreach, education, and recruitment efforts
- The number of individuals who express interest in a CEJA program
- The number of individuals who apply to each of the CEJA workforce and contractor programs, with support from the Navigator Team.
- The number of individuals referred, identified by destination, including referrals to the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program measured against the agreed referral plan.
- Through coordination with the workforce programs, the number of individuals who complete the training and who are placed in jobs.
- Program success stories of individuals who have been placed in the CEJA workforce and contractor programs.

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing state funds appropriated by Public Act 104-0464. The total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is $6,500,000. Awards will range from approximately $150,000 to $650,000. The Department expects to make 14-16 awards through this NOFO.

The period of performance is expected to be June 1, 2027 through May 31, 2028

Note that The Department is not bound by these estimates as the final awards will be based on the number of participants serviced and the impact of the program outcomes The award range stated above covers the Navigator responsibilities described in this NOFO. It does not include any additional funds that could possibly provided in a subaward by the Workforce Hub Grantee to provide case management, Barrier Reduction administration, or delivery of CEJA training services.

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:**
   Not for Profit organizations that are community-based providers (see Program Definitions). Community colleges and units of local government are not eligible applicants for this NOFO. One organization may propose to deliver all services or may subcontract with partners or with other entities to provide program elements. Applicants must demonstrate a history of providing education, outreach, and recruitment activities to low-wage or low-skilled workers or individuals from economically disadvantaged communities.

   Experienced and New Providers: This NOFO will consider lead applicants that have a history of delivering career navigator, career navigation, career assessment and counseling, or career pathways services to the target populations and a knowledge of clean-energy jobs, careers, and training. Applicants with little experience in these areas are encouraged to partner with entities that have experience delivering one or more of the program elements described in the NOFO. Organizations that have experience serving eligible populations in economically disadvantaged communities and equity investment eligible communities are encouraged to apply.

   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.).

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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 Workforce Hub Regions, they must submit a unique and complete application for each Workforce Hub Region. If an applicant intends to request funding to serve multiple Workforce Hub Regions, they must submit a unique and complete application for each Workforce Hub Region. However, an applicant may only submit one application per Workforce Hub Region.

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 Budge**t 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 Energy Transition Navigator Guided Program Application available on the NOFO webpage.

☐ **Project Work Plan**. Complete the Energy Transition Navigator Project Work Plan in the excel workbook that includes the following attachments

☐ **Attachment 1: Project Summary.** A brief narrative summary of the project, the organizations delivering it, and the region and communities served, with a summary of the total activity and outcome figures entered in Attachment 2.

☐ **Attachment 2: Activities and Outcomes**. Projected outreach, service delivery, referrals, placements, and participant characteristics, by quarter and cumulatively.

☐ **Attachment 3: Staffing Plan.** The grantee and partner staff who will perform each of the six required key program areas, with each position's location and weekly hours.

☐ **Attachment 4: Timeline.** Start-up activities and program delivery activities for the 12-month period of performance, with the staff responsible, the month, and the deliverable or milestone for each, covering outreach, recruitment, assessment, orientation, and referral.

☐ **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.

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

☐ **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.

☐ **Attachment 5: Interest in Workforce Hub Contracted Functions**. Grant applicants that are interested in the possibility of subcontracting with a Workforce Hub or Climate Works Grantee to provide case management, barrier reduction administration, and/or delivery of CEJA Core Competencies.

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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 Navigator grantees in any CEJA Workforce Hub 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/fdb1bcc7e30c4114aa35d5d033043b39**.

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	
NEED	1	The communities and populations you would serve	5	
	2	How you would cover your service area	5	
		Need subtotal		**10**
CAPACITY	3	Your track record and administrative capacity	5	
	4	Your team across the six required key program areas	10	
	5	Your equity lens and your roots in the communities you would serve	5	

	12	Coordinating with Climate Works and with the Returning Residents program	3	
	13	Employer, union, and apprenticeship engagement	5	
	14	Your partner network and the local workforce system	5	
	15	Coordinating with your Workforce Hub partner and planning referrals	4	
	16	Records, reporting, and continuous improvement	5	
		Capacity subtotal		**42**
QUALITY	6	Finding and recruiting participants	8	
	7	Running the single point of entry: screening, application support, and intake	7	
	8	Assessing readiness, and serving people not yet at the required level	8	
	9	Delivering the career exploration orientation	5	
	10	Referring and placing participants, and the pathway determination you hand off	6	
	11	Connecting participants to supportive services	4	
		Quality subtotal		**38**
COST EFFECTIVENESS	17	Your budget	7	
	18	Leverage, efficiency, and sustainability	3	
		Cost Effectiveness subtotal		**10**
		TOTAL		**100**

2. Feedback

Applicants will 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 Workforce Hub Region. The highest scoring applications in each Workforce Hub 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. Where the concentration of program-eligible participants justifies it, DCEO reserves the right to award grants to multiple applicants in a given area. 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).

Energy Transition Navigator Specific Reporting

Grantees shall provide an annual report to the Department by April 1 of each calendar year. The annual report shall include the following information:

- A description of the grantee's recruitment, screening, and training efforts;
- The number of outreach activities and events, dates, and number of participants who attended events or participated in activities;
- The number of individuals who enroll in and complete each of the CEJA workforce and contractor programs who were recruited by the Energy Transition Navigator team, broken down by location (nearest workforce hub or pre-apprenticeship center, environmental justice community and/or R3 community), race, gender, and age;
- A description of engagement activities with local stakeholders (workforce and employment agencies, small business development centers, community-based organizations, etc.) and any outcomes from these engagement activities; and
- A description of engagement activities with employers, industry leaders, unions and apprenticeship programs and any outcomes from these engagement activities.

Grantees will be required to submit regular reports to document the progress of the project as part of the grant requirements.

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. 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/cejaenergy**.

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/cejaenergy**.

APPLICATION CHECKLIST
This checklist outlines the required documents that must be uploaded to the DCEO application Smartsheet at: **https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/fdb1bcc7e30c4114aa35d5d033043b39** 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]** ***required***
- ☐ Uniform Budget **[EXCEL FILE and PDF]** ***required***
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Disclosure **[PDF FORM]** ***required***
- ☐ Mandatory Disclosures **[PDF FORM]** ***required***
- ☐ Guided Application [**WORD NARRATIVE**]
- ☐ Project Work Plan containing the following required attachments (tabs) **[EXCEL FILE]** ***required***
    - Attachment 1 – Project Summary
    - Attachment 2 – Activities and Outcomes
    - Attachment 3 – Staffing Plan
    - Attachment 4 – Timeline
- ☐ Resumes and/or Job Descriptions **[PDF]** ***required***
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding / Partnership Agreements – *Program Partners* **[PDF]** ***optional***
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding / Partnership Agreements - *Employers* **[PDF]** ***optional***
- ☐ Attachment 5: Interest in Workforce Hub Contracted Functions. **[WORD NARRATIVE]** ***optional***

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
    - Unclear Consultant Costs
    - Incorrect Indirect Cost Calculation
    - Budget Does Not Support the Work Plan

CEJA ENERGY TRANSITION NAVIGATOR 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 recruited and enrolled. The following table provides grantees with general guidance regarding baseline activity and outcome service level expectations for workforce hubs. Please note that the size of the hub generally depends on the projected number of job openings and placements.

Table 1: Service and Outcome Level Baseline Expectations

WORKFORCE HUB PARTICIPANTS	SMALL HUB	AVERAGE HUB	LARGE HUB
RECRUITED PARTICIPANTS TOTAL (Annual)	180	400	550
ENROLLED PARTICIPANTS TOTAL (Annual)	135	275	400
TRAINING COMPLETERS (60-80% of Training Participants)	65-90	135-180	200-250
PLACEMENTS (50-60% of Training Completers)	35-50	70-110	100-160

Table 2 provides applicants with general guidance regarding the total costs associated with administering CEJA workforce training programs.

Table 2 Total Program Cost Projections – General Guidelines

	SMALL HUB (135 Enrolled)	AVERAGE HUB (275 Enrolled)	LARGE HUB (400 Enrolled)
TOTAL GRANT	$200K-$250K	$350K-$400K	$450K-$550K

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.