



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
OFFICE OF EMPLOYMENT & TRAINING
JB Pritzker, Governor

CEJA POLICY: NAVIGATOR DIRECTIVE

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I. BACKGROUND

The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) created a diverse, highly skilled workforce ready for Illinois' clean energy future. Through the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (Workforce Hubs) and the Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program, CEJA provides statewide training opportunities in clean energy sectors like solar, wind, energy efficiency, and electric vehicle (EV) maintenance. These programs aim to develop a pipeline of qualified workers while addressing barriers to entry by offering supportive services.

Additionally, the Energy Transition Navigator Program is key in recruiting and guiding participants into CEJA workforce programs, particularly in regions without an established Workforce Hub or Climate Works program. Navigators are tasked with ensuring participants have access to relevant training and career opportunities while overcoming challenges related to uneven program rollout across different regions of Illinois.

II. COMPONENTS

Energy Transition Navigator grantees must focus on maximizing available resources, building partnerships, and facilitating access to clean energy training when CEJA programs are unavailable or at capacity. This notice provides detailed guidance on how to:

- Support participants in regions without a Workforce Hub or Climate Works program.
- Address situations where Workforce Hubs or Climate Works programs are operational but at capacity.

By following these steps, Navigators will ensure compliance with program requirements and maintain meaningful progress toward CEJA goals.

1. In regions where a Workforce Hub or Climate Works program has not yet been established, Navigators must focus on collaborative partnerships and strategic participant referrals to external clean energy training providers.
 - a. Develop Strategic Partnerships
 - 1) Identify and engage external clean energy training providers: Partner with Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs), Job Training and Economic Development (JTED) grantees, community colleges, and other CEJA-related programs.
 - 2) Referral pipelines: Establish formal pipelines for participant referrals to external training programs. Ensure that participants receive relevant training and support services from these external partners.

- 3) Engage employers in clean energy fields: Begin with solar employers, as solar training is often the first program offered by Workforce Hub grantees once established.
Understand employer skill requirements to align participant training accordingly.
 - b. Document Barriers and Support Provided by External Partners
 - 1) Record case notes in participant files to document identified barriers and how external programs will address them.
 - 2) Barrier Reduction Funds (BRF) are unavailable to Navigators, so connecting participants to external training programs that offer supportive services such as transportation or childcare assistance is essential.
 - c. Co-Enrollment Restrictions
 - 1) Navigators cannot co-enroll participants with other CEJA programs when local CEJA services are unavailable.
 - 2) Focus on connecting participants to external programs that provide clean energy training without duplicating case management efforts.
 - d. Avoid waitlists unless a participant explicitly requests to wait for a CEJA program opening. Instead, prioritize immediate referrals to external training opportunities.
2. When a Workforce Hub or Climate Works program is operational but unable to accommodate additional participants, Navigators must expand access through external partnerships and co-enrollment strategies.
 - a. Subawards and Subcontracts
 - 1) Collaborate with other training providers (e.g., WIOA, JTED, community colleges) to offer additional training opportunities aligned with CEJA's clean energy curriculum framework.
 - 2) CEJA funds can cover training costs provided by external partners, classifying these participants as CEJA trainees and making them eligible for Barrier Reduction Funds (BRF).
 - 3) Formalize partnerships with external providers through sub-award or subcontract agreements.
 - b. Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Co-Enrollment Agreements
 - 1) Establish MOUs with external programs (e.g., WIOA Adult, WIOA Dislocated Worker, JTED, Perkins/Adult Education) to enable co-enrollment where appropriate.
 - 2) Co-enrollment allows participants to access training through external programs while maintaining their status as CEJA participants.
 - 3) Ensure MOU agreements:
 - A) Clearly define the roles and responsibilities of each program partner.
 - B) Maintain compliance with CEJA reporting requirements.
 - C) Ensure participants receive recognition for CEJA participation.
 - 4) **Example:** If a participant qualifies for CEJA and WIOA programs, the external program may fund the training while the MOU ensures the participant remains eligible for CEJA services and reporting.

III. IMPLEMENTATION

1. Resource Mapping and Strategic Planning

- a. Conduct a regional assessment to identify clean energy training providers, workforce organizations, and employers.
 - b. Maintain an updated list of external resources and potential partners for referrals.
2. Formalize Agreements
 - a. Establish sub-awards, subcontracts, and MOUs with external providers to expand training capacity and ensure participant service access.
3. Ongoing Training for Navigators
 - a. Regularly train Navigators on partnership development, referral processes, co-enrollment procedures, and proper case documentation.
4. Participant-Focused Approach
 - a. Avoid maintaining long waitlists unless requested by participants.
 - b. Prioritize referrals to external training opportunities to ensure participants receive immediate support and do not experience delays in pursuing career development.

IV. INQUIRIES

Inquiries should be directed to the appropriate CEJA Regional Administrator, Larry Dawson at Larry.Dawson@illinois.gov for the Northern Region, Nate Keener at Nate.Keener@illinois.gov for the Central Region, or Michelle Cerutti at Michelle.Cerutti@illinois.gov for the Southern Region.

V. ATTACHMENTS

N/A

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Julio Rodriguez", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Julio Rodriguez, Deputy Director
Office of Employment and Training

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