

DCEO CEJA Technical Assistance Office Hours

Advanced Training Outcomes and Bridge
Test Out Criteria
August 19, 2025



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Why are we here?

- To gain a better understanding of the definition of “advanced training” as it relates to CEJA transition outcomes
- For DCEO to get feedback from grantees about how this definition will impact your operations
- To discuss how a student may opt or test out of certain bridge program elements
- For DCEO to get feedback on this policy and how it will impact your operations
- To announce several upcoming opportunities for collaboration and public presentation



Presenters

- Nate Keener, CEJA Central Regional Administrator, Office of Employment and Training at DCEO
- Larry Dawson, CEJA Northern Regional Administrator, Office of Employment and Training at DCEO
- Michelle Cerutti, CEJA Southern Regional Administrator, Office of Employment and Training at DCEO



Agenda for presentation

- Advanced Training Definition
- Feedback/Questions
- Bridge Test Out Criteria
- Feedback/Questions
- Announcements/Calls to Action
 - Richland Hiring Event
 - CEJA Partner Summit
 - September solar industry call
- Further Questions and Discussion



Advanced Training - Background

- We want CEJA Participants to get Primary Transition Outcomes – these are transitions that most strongly equate to program success and include getting hired in the clean energy industry, getting placed in an apprenticeship program in the construction trades/clean energy industry, and enrolling in advanced training
- As we eventually move to a performance-based payment model, primary transition outcomes will receive full reimbursement while secondary transition outcomes will only receive partial reimbursement.



Advanced Training - Context

- As participants complete elements of training, questions have arisen
 - When does a transition outcome begin?
 - What counts as advanced training?
 - Can a participant transition to another CEJA program and get a primary transition outcome?
- It is necessary for DCEO to apply a consistent standard when evaluating these questions



Advanced Training – Definition

- An **advanced training program** is an educational or occupational training experience that builds upon the participant's credentials earned in the CEJA program through either vertical or horizontal stacking.
- Advanced training programs must align with industry-recognized standards and contribute to a participant's upward mobility or broadened job qualifications within the clean energy sector.



Advanced Training – Definition (continued)

- **Vertical stacking** refers to progression to a higher level of expertise, responsibility, or credential—such as advancing from an entry-level or basic certificate/certification (e.g., NABCEP PV Associate) to a mid-level or supervisory credential (e.g., PV Design Specialist Certification or Energy Storage Installation Professional), an associate degree, or a 4 year degree.
- **Horizontal stacking** involves acquiring complementary credentials or skills at a similar level that expand a participant's employability across related occupations—such as adding certifications in energy efficiency or battery storage to a core solar installation credential.

When does "Advanced Training" kick in?

- Advanced Training refers to an outcome that occurs *AFTER* completing a CEJA program and earning a credential.
- The participant's individual employment or career plan specifies which CEJA training program they are enrolled in. The career plan should focus on helping the participant develop skills for jobs in a specific industry.
- Stacking credentials is encouraged, and participants should be empowered to create a flexible training plan that best suits their employment needs. However, grantees must ensure that the participant is pursuing credentials that complement each other and lead to employment in the clean energy industry.
- Grantees should prevent situations where a participant pursues unrelated credentials or attempts to enroll in training for multiple industries at once. Such actions could displace a future eligible participant waiting for enrollment.

Important Notes

- Advanced Training is NOT a continuation of CEJA Training – it is a transition outcome
 - Participants may continue to receive wrap-around supports through the barrier reduction funds, but they are transitioning out of CEJA training at this point and are in follow-up
 - CEJA training funds are no longer being used to pay for this participant's training
- Participants may NOT enroll in multiple CEJA programs at once or enter a new CEJA Program after completing one (with CEJA funds)



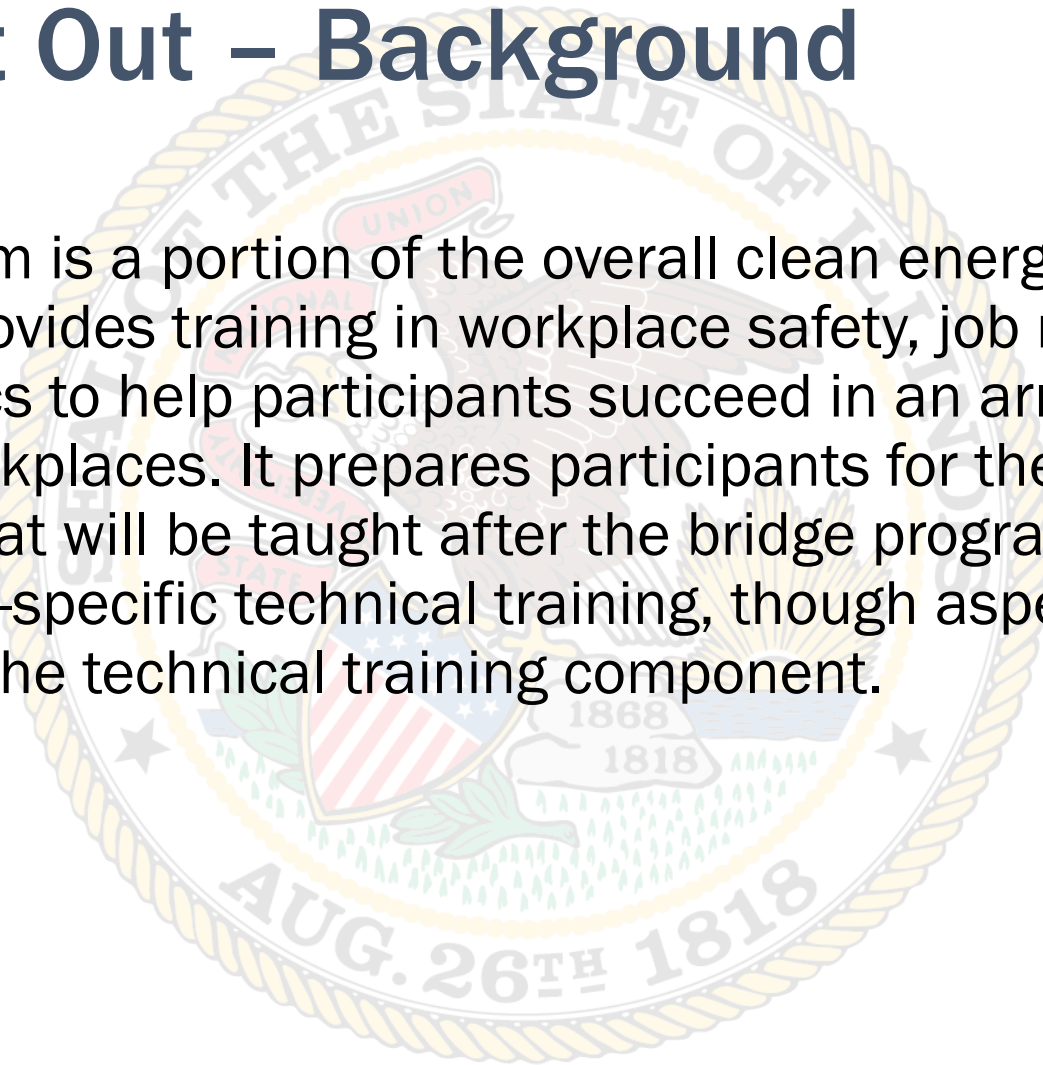
Questions/Feedback



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Bridge Test Out – Background

The Bridge Program is a portion of the overall clean energy jobs curriculum framework that provides training in workplace safety, job readiness skills and clean energy basics to help participants succeed in an array of clean energy industries and workplaces. It prepares participants for the job-specific technical training options that will be taught after the bridge program. It should be taught before starting job-specific technical training, though aspects may be taught concurrently with the technical training component.



Bridge Test Out – Background (continued)

The Bridge Program consists of the following components:

- Pre-Assessment
 - Needs Assessment
 - Career Assessment
 - Reading Assessment
 - Math Assessment
- Bridge Curriculum
 - Essential Employability Skills 101
 - Clean Energy Basics
 - Intro to Clean Energy Careers
 - Energy and Sustainability Fundamentals
 - Safety Basics (OSHA 10 required)
 - Building Science Principles
 - Construction Basics
 - Electrical Basics

Bridge Test Out – Context

One of the demographics being targeted by CEJA is “displaced energy workers.” These and many other workers may have years of experience in related fields. They may already have current OSHA/CPR certification. They may be able to demonstrate mastery in introductory elements of the Bridge program.

The Bridge Test Out policy provides guidance for assessing a participant’s eligibility for testing/credentialing out of certain elements of the Bridge Program

Bridge Test Out Criteria

Participants may be eligible to test out of components of the Bridge Program based on the following:

1. Prior training or coursework in clean energy, safety, or construction.
2. Valid and relevant certifications (e.g., OSHA 10, BPI, NCCER Core).
3. Documented work experience in relevant fields.
4. Demonstrated proficiency in pre-assessments or bridge assessments administered by grantee.



Components Eligible for Test Out

Depending on grantee policy, the following may be eligible for test-out:

1. Employability Skills 101 – Participants are eligible to test out if the provided Essential employability skills assessment is passed.
2. Safety Basics -OSHA 10 required; First Aid/CPR – Participants are eligible to test out if the previous OSHA card is less than 3 years.
3. Building Science Principles – Participants are eligible to test out if they receive a pass on BPI certification exam and receive a Building Science Principles certificate upon successful completion, completed within last 3 years.



Components Eligible for Test Out (continued)

Depending on grantee policy, the following may be eligible for test-out:

4. Construction Basics – Participants are eligible to test out if they have previously taken and passed an NCCER-aligned course within the last 3 years.
5. Entire Bridge Program – Participants are eligible to test out Entire Bridge and move directly into job-specific training if all components --Needs, Career, Reading, Math pre-assessments and the Bridge assessment-- are satisfactory in scoring.



Documentation Required for Bridge Test Out

Participants must submit the following documentation to qualify for test-out:

1. Official transcripts, certificates, or training records.
2. Proof of valid certifications (e.g., OSHA 10 card, BPI certificate), which must be uploaded into participant file.
3. Employer verification or resume detailing relevant work experience. (Chart on p. 13-bridge assessment).
4. Completed pre-assessments and bridge assessment scores.



Additional Notes and Grantee Flexibility and/or Requirements

Grantees may:

1. Determine if testing out will be allowed.
2. Use the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework for assessment to help determine any areas participant can test out of.
3. Decide on cohort sizes and scheduling flexibility, such as offering open entry/exit training formats for cohorts based on need.



Important Considerations for Participants

1. Participants who test out of components will only receive a stipend for hours of training that they partake in, within the CEJA program.
2. Participants who test out must wait for job-specific technical training to begin or for the class to catch up.
3. Testing out is optional but requires verification and approval by the grantee.
4. Grantees must require OSHA to be retaken if over 3 years old, to stay current with safety regulations.





Questions/Feedback



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Announcements/Calls to Action

- Richland Hiring Event with Slipstream – Tamika Thomas
- CEJA Partner Summit, September 17th, Springfield – Nate Keener
- Solar Industry Call, September 24th(ish), Virtual – please send us a slide about your solar program – Nate Keener

How can we help you?

Contact Us At:

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