FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Program

2026 Program Manual

Chapter 1: Introduction to the FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Program

Chapter Overview

By the end of this chapter, you will be able to:

- Explain how the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) Solar Pipeline Training Program ("Solar Pipeline"), as part of the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) workforce programs, will grow the clean energy workforce in Illinois.
- Describe how the FEJA Solar Pipeline Program aligns with Illinois workforce priorities.
- Explain the need to grow Illinois's clean energy industry.
- List the key components of the FEJA Solar Pipeline Program
- Incorporate each of the staffing roles required for the successful implementation of the FEJA Solar Pipeline.
- Reference fundamental program definitions.

About CEJA

Illinois is the first state in the Midwest to enact comprehensive legislation to combat the climate crisis and build an economy for the future. The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act ("CEJA") was signed into law by Governor Pritzker on September 15, 2021. CEJA sets aggressive goals to achieve 100% carbon-free power by 2045, achieve 100% renewable energy by 2050, electrify the transportation sector, and reduce energy use through energy efficiency. It provides support to workers and communities that will be hardest hit by the transition away from fossil fuels. The Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) laid the groundwork for CEJA, and its workforce development programs, to achieve these goals. The FEJA programs include the Solar Pipeline Training Program and Multi-Cultural Jobs Program, as part of the overall CEJA clean energy ecosystem.

To help the state achieve these clean energy goals in an equitable way, CEJA invests in training a diverse workforce for the clean energy jobs of the future. The Solar Pipeline Training Program is one of several

workforce programs in the CEJA ecosystem designed to create a skilled, diverse pipeline of workers prepared for careers in clean energy.

These programs will train Illinoisans for jobs in the solar energy industry and help solar energy businesses grow. The FEJA and CEJA workforce programs will help accelerate the adoption of clean energy sources, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency efforts. State and federal investments in clean energy will generate significant Illinois construction, installation, maintenance, and repair workforce activity.

The CEJA ecosystem workforce programs will help meet the demand for jobs in the clean energy industry. According to the Illinois Department of Employment Security Long-term Occupational and Industry Projections 2020-2030:

- The construction sector is projected to grow 12% over the next decade.
- Clean energy jobs in the construction and building trades sector are expected to grow even faster (see Muro et al, 2024 Clean Energy Jobs). For instance, solar installer jobs nationwide are expected to grow 52%, and wind turbine technician jobs are expected to grow 68%.
- State and federal investments in clean energy technologies and services are expected to encourage further growth in the clean energy sector over the next 10 years in Illinois.

According to the Department of Energy's 2025 U.S. Energy & Employment Report:

- In 2024, there were more than 127,000 clean energy jobs in Illinois. This includes jobs in solar and wind power generation, power transmission, distribution and storage, energy efficiency, and clean energy vehicle and components manufacturing.
- Clean energy jobs in Illinois grew almost five times faster than the state's overall economy.
- Employment data from these sectors show that women and minorities are under-represented, especially in the higher-paying occupations.

Historically, the workforce investments in Illinois have not benefited all Illinois communities and workers. The CEJA workforce programs are intended to address these inequities. CEJA programs prioritize Illinoisans who live in communities that have historically faced economic barriers and environmental damage with the goal of bolstering a diverse workforce in the clean energy industry. The CEJA workforce programs also prioritize Illinoisans with barriers to employment, such as people who have been incarcerated.

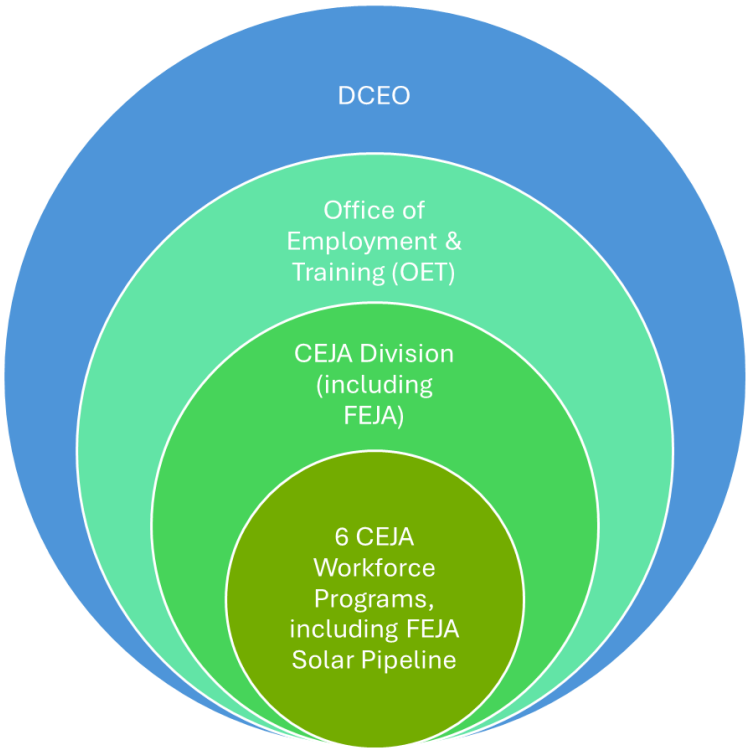
The intention of the CEJA workforce programs is to grow the clean energy workforce to meet Illinois' demand for clean energy products and services. CEJA's workforce programs will invigorate and diversify the clean energy workforce in Illinois. Billions of dollars of funding in clean energy technology and infrastructure through CEJA, FEJA, and other state and federal funding sources over the next decade have the potential to be a catalyst for the full inclusion of women, people of color, justice-involved people, and other underrepresented individuals in the construction and clean energy workforce. The CEJA workforce programs will create opportunities for Illinois businesses, communities, families, and

residents. By providing training, employment, and career development, the CEJA workforce programs will help to increase and sustain prosperity in all communities.

The CEJA workforce programs allow the state to apply and implement all the research and best practices from the field with fewer of the restrictions and limitations that come with most federally funded workforce programs. Illinois has the opportunity to innovate in a way that the rest of the country can follow to grow the clean energy workforce.

DCEO and CEJA

The CEJA legislation charged the **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)** with administering the CEJA ecosystem workforce programs. These programs are being administered by DCEO's Office of Employment and Training. This office is responsible for administering many other Illinois workforce programs, including the Local Workforce Innovation Act funding (LWIA) and American Job Centers throughout Illinois. The figure below shows the organizational structure for the programs administered by DCEO.



DCEO

- The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is a large state agency that creates equitable economic opportunities across Illinois. It delivers programs and services related to broadband development, business development, community assistance, employment and training, entrepreneurship, innovation and technology, regional economic development, and more.

Office of Employment and Training (OET)

- OET is one main office within DCEO. It is responsible for administering job training and career and employment services to connect employers to a highly skilled workforce.

CEJA Division (including FEJA)

- The CEJA Division is one of several OET divisions. It is responsible for implementing six CEJA and FEJA workforce programs to grow the clean energy workforce in Illinois.

FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Program

- The Solar Pipeline Training Program is one of six workforce programs under the CEJA Division.

FEJA & CEJA Workforce Programs

The CEJA ecosystem workforce programs, administered by DCEO through their Office of Employment and Training, CEJA Division, are summarized below:

- The Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program ("CEJA Workforce Hubs") creates 14 hub locations to deliver clean jobs training to participants using a standard clean jobs curriculum framework, preparing them for various entry-level clean energy jobs. Hubs will recruit, pre-screen, and offer clean energy training. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program funding is included in this program.
- The Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program ("Climate Works") is a statewide initiative to create a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers prepared for careers in clean energy construction and building trades, as well as other clean energy job opportunities. The Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program will recruit, pre-screen, and provide pre-apprenticeship skills training. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction funding is included in this program.
- The Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program ("Returning Resident Program") will deliver clean jobs training, using a standard clean jobs curriculum framework, to people in the custody of the Department of Corrections. The goal is to prepare people for entry-level clean energy jobs upon release.
- The Energy Transition Navigators Program ("Navigators") will focus on outreach, education, and recruitment to equity investment-eligible communities and individuals to increase participation in the CEJA workforce programs, including the CEJA Workforce Hubs and Climate Works. The

Energy Transition Navigator Programs will provide support and career guidance for participants enrolling in these programs.

- The Solar Pipeline Training Program will use the standard clean jobs curriculum framework to train individuals to gain employment in the solar industry. It will utilize employer-driven training approaches that pair education and occupational training with work-based learning and support services to individuals in need of self-sustaining employment.
- The Multi-Cultural Jobs Program will assist in the development of a workforce with the requisite knowledge, skills, training, experience, and competence to work in a variety of clean energy careers. It will promote participation of targeted populations and communities; and identify partnership opportunities within training programs to maximize the social benefits of the funds provided.

FEJA Solar Pipeline grantees will work closely with the grantees of the other CEJA programs to grow the clean energy workforce in Illinois.

Illinois Workforce Priorities and Best Practices

The FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Program is aligned with Illinois' workforce, education, and economic development priorities. The program aligns with the Governor's Action Agenda for Workforce Development and Job Creation by advancing the following action areas:

Unite workforce development partners around regional cluster strategies

- Identify high-impact regional clusters and associated in-demand occupations
- Implement a coordinated workforce development strategy around regional clusters
- Strengthen workforce development in all parts of the state

Prepare Illinois workers for a career, not just their next jobs

- Increase apprenticeship opportunities
- Address barriers to successful training and employment
- Establish and support equity goals and align with Perkins equity goals

Connect job seekers with employers

- Shorten the time from credential to employment
- Use smart online tools to connect job-seekers to valuable information and programs that work
- Integrate workforce services across program providers for one-stop customers
- Give employers easy access to the skilled workforce they need

The FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Program is designed to help people successfully transition into family-sustaining clean energy careers by:

- Leveraging employer relationships to connect workers to businesses that are hiring.

- Improving access to clean energy jobs for underserved populations and helping improve career outcomes by providing qualified job candidates with the skills necessary to get to work.
- Offering hands-on learning opportunities for participants.
- Helping participants decide if a clean energy career is right for them by exposing them to the different clean energy industries.

Nationally Recognized Workforce Best Practices

The program requirements of the CEJA workforce programs are based on a review of best practices for workforce training programs. Grantees are expected to incorporate these best practices as they deliver the program elements:

- Compensation, including optional stipends, that fosters retention (versus dropping out because it is not possible to make ends meet). Attendance-based stipends effectively support participants' financial needs.
- A focus on equity that goes beyond numeric participant targets and focuses on all aspects of program design and partnerships, including successful transition into a clean energy career and program belonging and inclusiveness.
- The provision of supports to reduce barriers as appropriate and as needed.
- Strong partnerships between stakeholder groups, including employers, community-based organizations, community colleges, and local workforce areas.
- Consistent, transparent entry, and success requirements.
- Strong community outreach and community leadership within the programs.
- Development of technical skills through hands-on activities, work-based learning, math skills development, and literacy skills development.
- Career pathway and alignment with employer needs.
- Academic and career exploration.
- Preparation for one or more industry-recognized credentials.
- Strong case management, including post-program retention supports, mentorship, fostering alumni networks, and preparing participants for workplace culture.
- Training for job search skills, resume development, and interview practices.
- Offering financial literacy, digital literacy, life coaching, and education.
- Enhanced exposure to and the ability to interact with clean energy employees of the same race, ethnicity, or gender as participants.

Solar Pipeline Training Program (FEJA Solar Pipeline)

Program Overview and Goals

Grantees of the Solar Pipeline Training Program ("Grantees") will recruit and provide solar installer and related workforce training to job seekers. Grantees will engage with potential employers, community-based organizations, educational institutions, and community-based and labor-based training providers

to ensure program-eligible individuals across the State have dedicated and sustained support to enter and build clean energy careers in the solar industry.

The program grants six organizations throughout the State to provide solar energy and related workforce and training opportunities to participants, engage with potential employers, and form partnerships to ensure participants have dedicated and sustained support to build careers in the solar industry and related sectors.

The main objective of the Solar Pipeline Training Program is to increase access to and opportunities for education, training, and support services to help program-eligible individuals succeed in the clean energy industry generally; and the solar energy sector specifically. Upon completion, participants will be prepared for entry-level solar energy jobs.

As a result of the expected growth in demand stemming from capital investments resulting from CEJA, Rebuild Illinois, the Inflation Reduction Act, and the accelerating retirements of the baby boomer generation, there is strong and increasing demand for clean energy jobs. The FEJA Solar Pipeline Training program will help meet this demand, contributing to the following goals:

- Providing a career pathway into the clean energy industry for members of historically underrepresented communities.
- Providing eligible participants with the skills for lifelong job security.
- Promoting clean energy generally and solar energy specifically as viable job industries for women, people of color, and those with barriers to employment.
- Creating a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers prepared for careers in solar energy.
- Helping increase and sustain prosperity in all communities.

Grantees will prioritize recruitment efforts and workforce services for persons who are graduates of, or individuals currently enrolled in the foster care system, or persons with a record in the grantee's service area. Grantees may also recruit and serve individuals who face barriers to employment such as low educational attainment, low levels of literacy, language barriers, displaced energy workers, or individuals from environmental justice communities, as defined below.

In other words, the program is focused on increasing opportunities in clean energy careers for **equity investment eligible persons**, defined as:

- Persons whose primary residence is in an equity investment eligible community (an Environmental Justice or R3 community—please see the CEJA Grantee Map).
- Persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system.
- Persons who are formerly incarcerated.
- Persons with barriers to employment.

Note: *While equity investment eligible people get priority placement to the program, anybody over the age of 18 with a barrier is eligible.*

These communities and groups of people have historically been left out of clean energy investments and other workforce and economic development investments. It is the intent of CEJA ecosystem workforce

programs, including this program, to address these historic inequities by targeting equity investment eligible persons for participation in the program.

Grantees are also required to provide barrier reduction services as part of their program. Barrier reduction services are necessary to help equity investment eligible individuals overcome financial and other barriers to participate in and succeed in the program. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program funds will allow grantees to provide support services to participants while they are in the program. Grantees will partner with and refer participants to outside providers for support service needs that cannot be met in- house.

***Note**: For more information about barrier reduction, see the CEJA Policy 02-PL-24 Barrier Reduction on the CEJA Policy page.*

Main Program Elements

Grantees will deliver the following major program elements:

- *Participant recruitment* -
  Perform **outreach**, in coordination with Energy Transition Navigators, other FEJA and CEJA programs, and community partners, to recruit eligible individuals for the training program. Outreach and recruitment efforts will include providing information and consultation to eligible individuals on the training opportunities and support services available through CEJA ecosystem workforce development programs, including FEJA, and other statewide and local workforce development programs.
- *Training delivery* -
  Grantees will provide training, certification preparation, job readiness, and skill development to **participants**, utilizing the **Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework** to prepare people for entry-level clean energy jobs generally and solar industry jobs specifically.
- *Employer partnerships* -
  Grantees will engage with local employers, industry leaders, and trades associations to identify the skill and hiring needs of the local clean energy industry, prioritize training program offerings, inform a need for potential curricular modifications, provide career pathway support, and assist with job placement for equity investment eligible persons.
- *Barrier reduction services* -
  Grantees will deliver **barrier reduction services**—also known as **support services**—to mitigate challenges participants may face in accessing and completing the training. Services may include, but are not limited to transportation costs, technology assistance, emergency bill payments, personal health, childcare assistance, tuition assistance, food assistance, referrals to other services, and tutoring.

  ***Note:** For more information about barrier reduction, see the CEJA Policy 02-PL-24 Barrier Reduction on the CEJA Policy page.*

- *Transition services* -

Grantees will provide transition services to participants following completion to help them find jobs, succeed in the workplace, and build their careers.

Program Outcomes

Grantees are required to set goals related to participant outcomes and report on their progress in meeting these outcomes. Outcome metrics will include:

- Number of individuals who apply to, enroll in, and complete the Program, broken down by equity investment eligible criteria, race, gender, age, and veteran status;
- Number of individuals who have participated in and completed the Program who are initially accepted and placed into clean energy jobs, broken down by equity investment eligible criteria, race, gender, age, and veteran status.
- Hourly wages, including hourly overtime pay rate, and benefits of individuals placed into employment by race, gender, age, and veteran status.
- Percentage of jobs by race, gender, and geography held by Program trainees or graduates that are full-time equivalent positions, meaning that the position held is fulltime, direct, and permanent based on 2,080 hours worked per year.
- Number of individuals who have participated in and completed the Program who have remained in jobs one calendar year after their placement.

Outcome goals should be informed by current and relevant labor market information for the regions where grantees are providing services. When setting goals, grantees should consider the number of equity investment eligible people in their proposed region, the number of apprenticeships in the region, and the number of clean energy jobs and employers. See the CEJA Grantee Map for equity investment eligible communities, data, and clean energy employers in your region. See also Clean Energy Jobs Data Packets prepared and provided by the Climate Jobs Institute.

The Department requires grantees to collect and record data to determine whether grantees are meeting their proposed outcomes and goals.

Equity Values

Equity is at the center of the CEJA ecosystem workforce development programs, this includes FEJA. Grantees must integrate the key equity values throughout all elements of their program. They must demonstrate an understanding of how differences (e.g., gender, race, geography, educational attainment, and justice system involvement) impact access to, experience with, and success within the clean energy industry. Equity recognizes that each person has different needs and different circumstances. Programs with an equity focus consider these needs and circumstances when allocating resources and providing opportunities. Centering equity means eliminating systemic barriers and leveling the playing field for disadvantaged and underserved groups. True equity requires and works together with the other core values of diversity, inclusion, and accessibility. See chapter 2 of the program manual for more information about the core equity values.

Partnerships

The FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Program utilizes an industry/sector partnership model to build a pipeline of qualified workers in the solar industry. The National Skills Coalition states,

> Industry/sector partnerships can bring together local businesses, unions and worker organizations, community colleges, training providers, and community organizations, to develop local and industry-specific workforce strategies. These relationships can inform training and career pathways, broker apprenticeship and work-based learning, validate industry-specific credentials, inform industry practices, and shape hiring and worker advancement strategies.
>
> Since industry partnerships intentionally design training, hiring, and advancement opportunities between workers and employers within a particular sector, they can be used to disrupt occupational segregation, mitigate bias in hiring and advancement practices, while connecting workers of color to quality jobs, if they are equity focused. These efforts also reduce occupational segregation and produce positive and equitable labor market outcomes for workers of color and small businesses.

See chapter 3 for a description of how grantees can intentionally build relationships with employers, local and regional construction and building trades, union groups, Local Workforce Areas, community colleges, employers, Registered Apprenticeship Programs, community-based organizations, and secondary schools, among others to reach program outcomes. The success of the FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Program depends upon building strong industry/sector partnerships.

FEJA Solar Pipeline Lifecycle



The FEJA Solar Pipeline is intended to support participants throughout the training lifecycle, from outreach and recruitment to completion, transition, and follow-up. Chapters 3-7 of the manual address the different elements of this lifecycle.

Chapter 4 discusses how to conduct outreach and recruit participants. Outreach must be equitable and inclusive of all populations, including equity-focused populations. Outreach strategies must acknowledge disparities in the clean energy industry and help applicants make informed decisions about their participation. Outreach and recruitment work is done in conjunction with Energy Transition Navigators.

Chapter 5 focuses on leveraging assessment and application tools in the Reporting System to help participants apply, enroll, and start receiving program services.

Chapter 6 describes the Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program services that grantees may offer to reduce barriers that impede participants' success in the program. The goal of these support services is to remove or reduce barriers to participation and success. They include wrap-around support services, such as transportation or childcare support; and student support services to help maximize participants' ability to be successful in the program and obtain the offered certifications/credentials. This chapter also discusses optional stipends and incentives to help participants stay financially solvent during the training period.

Note: *For more information about barrier reduction, see the CEJA Policy 02-PL-24 Barrier Reduction. For more information about stipends, see the Stipends and Incentives Policy and the Stipend Procedure Template on the CEJA Policy page.*

Chapter 7 discusses the solar training requirements as identified in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework. Curricula will include a clean energy basics curriculum, essential employability skills, and solar training guidelines. The training should have a strong emphasis on hands-on practice in a construction laboratory and at job sites. Training will lead to obtaining relevant certifications in the solar industry.

Chapter 8 focuses on what happens after program completion. Grantees will assist participants in transitioning to jobs and other training, connecting them to employers and unions, and referring them to advanced education programs. Transition services may include, but are not limited to, mock interviews, application preparation, resume writing, referral to a career counselor, and job search assistance.

Grantees are expected to provide continued case management services to program participants after they complete the program and transition into a clean energy job based on an assessment of the participant's needs. Follow-up services may include but are not limited to counseling individuals about the workplace, assisting individuals and employers in resolving work-related problems, providing individuals with referrals to peer support groups or other community resources, and contacting individuals or employers to help secure better-paying jobs. These follow-up services must be available to participants for at least one year after completing the training program. Long-term follow-up after the first year will focus on collecting participant outcomes data.

Administrative Requirements

Grantees will be required to meet a number of requirements to administer the grant. Chapter 9 discusses the professional development and technical assistance offered by the DCEO to improve grantee performance and enable the successful implementation of the program, its policies, procedures, and technological applications.

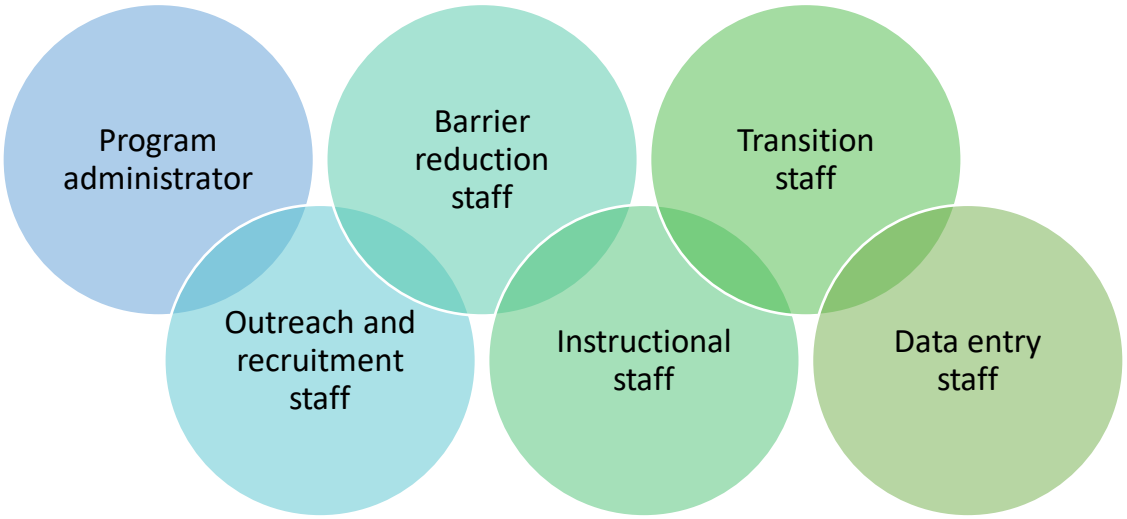
Grantees are required to report certain information about their programs, including the number of applicants, participants, demographics of participants, individual completions, and job placements. Chapter 10 of the grantee manual highlights the data management process, the types of data grantees must collect, and the role of the Reporting System in tracking data.

Chapter 11 of the grantee manual describes the expectations for keeping financial records, submitting program and financial reports, and appropriate use of program funds.

Finally, chapter 12 discusses the program monitoring required to ensure that programs are making progress toward achieving their goals within the defined timeline.

Staff Roles

Grantees must have a dedicated staff to complete all the program requirements effectively. Below is a list of the staff roles that the FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Program expects all grantees to have at their sites. Staff roles are defined as a list of responsibilities attributed to a staff member(s). The Department fully understands that many grantees will have staff that cover more than one role or utilize partnerships to fulfill these staff roles. Later sections of this manual will discuss these roles in more detail.



Program Administrator

The Program Administrator is responsible for program compliance and ensuring that performance metrics are met and required reporting is complete. The Program Administrator will also oversee program operations, onboard staff, and monitor the performance of other program roles.

Outreach and Recruitment Staff

Outreach and Recruitment staff secure a constant flow of leads for the program, conduct pre-screen assessments, ensure program applications are completed, and conduct, along with other team members, standardized interviews. They coordinate with CEJA-funded Energy Transition Navigators to recruit eligible leads identified by the Energy Transition Navigators. Refer to Chapter 4 for more information on the requirements outlined here.

Barrier Reduction Service Staff

Barrier Reduction Service Staff are responsible for support services beginning with the **Service Needs Assessment** during Intake. They will complete the support service assessment, set up necessary services, and offer support if participants begin to struggle. They will administer funds to provide barrier reduction **wrap-around support services** and **student support services** to help eligible individuals overcome financial and other barriers to participation. The Barrier Reduction Service Staff will also be responsible for the academic needs of students, specifically student support services, progress reports, action plans, monitoring attendance and academic performance, make-up sessions, assessment retakes, and tutoring. Barrier Reduction Staff will also source other needed support services from outside providers and partners and refer participants to those services.

Instructional Staff

Grantees are required to have qualified and dedicated instructors for their program. Instructors do not have to be employees; grantees can contract with an individual or partner organization to carry out the training portion of their Solar Pipeline Program. Instructors must provide classroom, hands-on, and worksite training and tutoring.

Transition Staff

These staff ensure that career assessments are completed and individualized career plans are created in coordination with other program staff. This includes creating resumes, delivering career services such as mock interviews, and assisting with completing job applications, among other tasks. They also work with contractors, U.S. DOL-registered apprenticeship programs, DCEO-funded Energy Transition Navigators, and other partners to ensure the timely and successful transition of participants who complete the program. They conduct the required post-program proactive follow-up of participants who complete.

Data Entry Staff

Data entry staff are responsible for ensuring timely reporting of program data in the Reporting System, including entering participant information, programmatic and service data, outcome metrics, and verifying data accuracy, among others. Data entry staff will create records, enter information, update records, run reports, and communicate with CEJA Grant Managers. Data entry staff must have basic computer skills (typing, navigating the file system, opening and closing files and programs, and proficiency with basic office software).

Reporting System

Grantees must utilize the Reporting System to deliver their program.

The Reporting System, developed by DCEO partner Southern Illinois University at Carbondale (SIUC), is on the Illinois workNet platform. The Reporting System is:

- **A tool for tracking participants in the program.** Grantees must use the Reporting System to keep track of individual participants and their service needs. This information can be securely shared with the grantee team and any external partners, such as Energy Transition Navigators. Its features include:

  - **Outreach tracking:** Solar Pipeline Training and Energy Transition Navigator grantees must enter contact information and case notes about all interested potential participants. This is a shared responsibility between these grantees, and information sharing is required.
  - **Application and intake:** The system walks grantees through the pre-screening, application, and service needs assessment questions to determine eligibility and help participants enroll in the program and start receiving services.
  - **Barrier reduction service management:** Grantees can enter and track wrap-around support services and student support services for each participant in the Reporting System. The system allows grantees to enter the costs of services and information about referrals. It flags participants who need follow-up.
  - **Training program tracking:** Grantees can track participants' progress in completing the training program elements. While the Reporting System is NOT a learning management system (it does not allow or require grantees to enter specific assignments, grades, or take attendance), it does track participants' overall progress in the training program and completion status.
  - **Transition services and follow-up:** After participants complete the training, grantees can track participants' progress towards meeting their career goals. The system tracks any services needed to achieve these goals. Grantees can add case notes and collect information about participant outcomes (e.g., apprenticeship placement, job placement, advancement).
- **A tool for program monitoring and reporting.** The Reporting System makes it easy to determine where you are in meeting your program goals and outcomes. It can run reports showing participants' services needing attention or past their due dates. It can show completion and enrollment status, services provided, and much more. Grantees will be required to run regular reports to document progress in meeting their performance metrics. Grant Managers will also periodically utilize the Reporting System to run reports to assess progress and identify areas where support or improvement is needed. The Reporting System is crucial in tracking overall CEJA workforce program outcomes and goals.
- **A tool for tracking external engagement.** Grantees are expected to engage with apprenticeship sponsors, employers, community-based organizations, and other service providers to meet program outcomes successfully. The Reporting System allows grantees to keep track of engagement efforts with external partners and share information with other team partners and Energy Transition Navigators.

While grantees may have additional case management, engagement tracking, and reporting tools they use, they are still required to enter participant and engagement information into the Reporting System. Utilizing multiple tools for case management, engagement tracking, and reporting may increase your team's time on case management and data entry. We strongly recommend using the Reporting System from the outset and avoiding duplication of efforts.

Staff Access to the Reporting System

Not all program staff need to utilize the Reporting System (and allowing too many staff members access can increase the risk of errors). However, the Reporting System will be more effective if multiple staff utilize it as a case management, engagement tracking, and reporting tool. We recommend that the following grantee team members have access to the Reporting System:

- **Lead staff responsible for individual participants.** Case notes and participant progress information must stay up to date so that the entire program team can effectively serve participants. Staff may include:
    - Outreach and Recruitment staff
    - Barrier Reduction Services staff
    - Transition staff
- **Staff responsible for running reports, engaging with external partners, monitoring finances, and overall administration of the program**. These staff could include:
    - Program Administrator staff
    - Data Entry staff

Technical assistance will be provided to all staff members who are utilizing the Reporting System, and detailed instructions will be provided by DCEO's Southern Illinois University partners.

Policy

For CEJA policy information, please access the CEJA Policy page in the Partner Guide.

Glossary

We have defined important terms used throughout the Program Manual.

Accessibility: Ease of use or full participation in services, facilities, workplaces, products, and communications for all individuals, including those with disabilities and limited English proficiency.

Acceptance and Commitment Letter: A document designating that the participant has been accepted into the program. It will be signed by the participant to outline their commitment to the program and program policies, including compliance with attendance and post-assessment requirements, health and safety measures, drug testing, FERPA and waiver, among others. Participants must sign this commitment letter to be part of the program.

Advance: Pre-program funding from their approved grant award is provided to the grantee. This funding must be requested and approved by CEJA administrators and typically does not exceed 20% of the full grant award.

Applicant: A potential CEJA program participant who has started or completed the application process but has not been formally accepted into the program yet.

Barrier Reduction Service Staff: A staff role responsible for providing wrap-around support services, academic support services, and transition services as determined by participants through the Service Needs Assessment and Career Assessments. Barrier reduction services are designed to mitigate or remove barriers that might impede participants' ability to effectively transition to a clean energy job.

Belonging: When participants can bring their authentic selves into the training program and worksites. Belonging makes participants feel valued, allows them to develop positive connections, enhances their sense of well-being, and encourages them to maximize their fullest potential. Includes creating a welcoming environment.

Benchmarking: Identify points within the program, typically at regular intervals, when actual performance is measured against performance goals.

Budget Modification: The process started by grantees to adjust their existing budget. All budget modifications must originate with and first be approved by DCEO. Contact your Grant Manager to get started.

Bullying: A persistent pattern of mistreatment from others in the workplace that causes physical or emotional harm. It can include such tactics as verbal, nonverbal, psychological, or physical abuse and/or humiliation.

Career Assessment: A tool utilized by the Grantee staff to assess the post-completion plans and interests of participants and create a career plan. Initial career assessment questions are asked during the intake phase. The career plan will be updated 3-4 weeks before program completion.

Carry-in Credit: Credit awarded to grantees in their first and/or second award renewal year for participants who successfully complete and/or transition after their initial enrollment year. Carryover credits provide a compliance credit for the grant year the participant was first enrolled and a financial credit for the current grant year.

Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA): Comprehensive energy legislation passed in 2021 that puts Illinois on a path to 100% renewable energy by the year 2050 by establishing various new programs and expanding existing programs aimed at accelerating the adoption of clean energy sources, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency efforts. It includes workforce programs that will help to crow the clean energy workforce to meet the demand for clean energy technologies and services. Recognizing that historically, some communities have benefited more from clean energy investments while others suffer more from the impacts of environmental injustice, CEJA prioritizes Illinoisians who live in communities that have historically faced economic barriers and environmental damage, bolstering a diverse workforce in the clean energy industry. CEJA also prioritizes displaced energy workers and people who face barriers to employment.

Reporting System: A custom database developed by DCEO in partnership with the Center for Workforce Development at Southern Illinois University. The Reporting System is the information hub for all programmatic tracking and most program reporting. It is also a case management tool to track participant service delivery and needs.

Certifications and Credentials: The FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Program will help participants achieve several industry-recognized certifications and credentials, including, at minimum, OSHA 10 and First Aid/CPR. It will also prepare participants for job-specific certification exams like the NABCEP Photovoltaic Associate exam.

Coaching: Coaching refers to a tailored engagement between a professional program coach and the grantee. It can also refer to tailored engagement and support provided by the grantee to program staff to facilitate professional development, as well as tailored engagement and support provided to program participants to assist them in completing the program and attaining or retaining employment.

Community-based Organization (CBO): An organization that provides employment, skill development, or related services to members of the community. This definition includes community colleges, nonprofits, and local governments.

Complete Status: A participant who has completed program training services by meeting all attendance, testing, and certification requirements for successful completion. Participants who have completed the program will still receive career/transition services.

Continuous Program Improvement: An ongoing effort to improve services and program delivery, and it continuously and effectively uses program data to understand a program's strengths and weaknesses at a particular moment in time.

Contractor: A non-state entity that receives a contract to provide goods and/or services for the awarding non-state entity. The contract creates a procurement relationship between the contractor and the Grantee/Recipient and/or the Subgrantee/Subrecipient**/**Subawardee.

Curriculum: The overall content of the training program, which must include, at a minimum, clean energy basics, essential employability skills, and at least two job-specific training options. Training will align with the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework.

Dashboard: The Reporting System dashboard provides detailed information about program leads and participants. Grantees can track progress through this dashboard.

Data: Individual pieces of information that, when analyzed, can provide the Office of Employment and Training and its grantees with valuable information.

Data Entry Staff: A staff role responsible for entering data into the Reporting System in a timely and accurate manner.

Data Management Process: The administrative process of acquiring, entering, validating, and processing participant and grantee data.

Discrimination: Bias or prejudice resulting in a denial of opportunity or unfair treatment when hiring, creating, or applying policies, training, promoting, firing, or laying off employees or in any other terms and conditions of employment.

Diversity: The representation of people from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. How people differ encompasses specific characteristics that may include, but not be limited to, race, ethnicity, gender, age, national origin, religion, disability, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, education, marital status, language, and physical appearance.

Enrolled Participant: An individual who has completed the prescreening and application process, who is eligible to participate, who has signed the commitment agreement, and who has started receiving services.

Environmental Justice Communities: Communities defined by the Illinois Power Agency under the Illinois Power Agency Act (20 ILCS 3855), 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 includes Environmental Justice communities and R3 communities, please see the CEJA Grantee Map.

Equity: Recognizes that each person has different needs and circumstances and allocates the resources and opportunities based on those specific needs and circumstances.

Equity-Focused Populations: 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.

Equity Investment-Eligible Communities: The geographic areas throughout Illinois that would most benefit from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination and foster sustainable economic growth. Specifically, equity investment-eligible communities include R3 areas as established according to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (410 ILCS 705) and Environmental Justice (EJ) communities as defined by the Illinois Power Agency according to the Illinois Power Agency Act (20 ILCS 3855). See the CEJA Grantee Map for equity investment-eligible communities.

Equity Investment Eligible Persons: The persons who would most benefit from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination and foster sustainable economic growth. Specifically, equity investment-eligible persons mean the following people: (1) persons whose primary residence is in an equity investment eligible community (see the CEJA Grantee Map); (2) persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system; or (3) persons who are formerly incarcerated.

Exited Participant: An individual who is no longer receiving any training services, transition/career services, or student support services. Exited participants may still receive follow-up to track participant outcomes. Typically, exited participants have completed the program and have received one year of active follow-up/transition support. One year after completion, they no longer receive support services.

Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA): A federal law that affords participants who are 18 years old or who have entered a postsecondary institution at any age (“eligible student”) the right to

have some control over the disclosure of personally identifiable information from their educational records. The FERPA statute is found at 20 U.S.C. § 1232g, and the FERPA regulations are found at 34 CFR Part 99.

FEJA Solar Pipeline Training Partner Guide: A web-based resource site that houses Program resources, tools, webinars, training schedules, and other essential information. The Partner Guide is also where grantees can access the current Program Manual. The Partner Guide can be accessed through Illinois workNet.

Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA): The state law that provides oversight of all grants from the State of Illinois helps to provide transparency to the grant process and standardizes grant management across all State of Illinois agencies.

Grantee/Recipient: Non-state entity that receives a monetary award directly from a state awarding agency to carry out the activities as outlined in the award agreement.

Harassment: A wide range of unwelcome and offensive behaviors. They can be repetitive but do not have to be.

Incentive: An additional payment made to a participant above and beyond the stipend. The payment becomes available for disbursement when a participant achieves a certain milestone or reaches a specific predetermined goal. An incentive is not legally considered a wage. An incentive aims to motivate participants to reach programmatic milestones or achieve a goal during their participation in the training program.

Inclusion: An environment in which individuals are treated fairly and respectfully, have equal access to resources and opportunities, and can fully participate and contribute.

Inquiry Contact: Individuals interested in learning more about the training program and potentially participating. Their contact information will be entered into the Reporting System for further follow-up. The aim is to funnel inquiry contacts through the prescreening process and enroll them in the program.

Instructional Staff: A staff role responsible for providing training services to participants, including classroom, hands-on, and worksite instruction and tutoring.

Internal Controls Questionnaire: Grant applicants annually complete the fiscal and administrative risk assessment, typically at the end of the grant application process. This questionnaire assesses an organization's ability to implement the required program.

Evaluation Study: A study that tracks program outcomes and impacts up to 10 years after a participant exited the program.

Marketing Plan: A plan that outlines the target audience and the tasks to be performed, lists the communication channels to be utilized, outlines a timeline for when marketing and communications will be distributed, and makes staff assignments.

Monthly Compliance Review: Monthly compliance monitoring by the Grant Manager(s) ensures grantees adhere to program expectations based on the grant agreement and the approved Work Plan. This review produces the Monthly Compliance Progress Report and Payment Worksheet, which are sent to grantee administrators monthly.

Monthly Compliance Progress Report: Documentation of outcome metrics entered in the Reporting System for the preceding month. It provides per-cohort metrics and reimbursement levels in addition to data trends.

Monthly Compliance Payment Worksheet: Documentation of approved financial reimbursement per month based on a grantee's performance. It provides aggregate metrics and reimbursement per metric, as well as the year-to-date total approved reimbursement level.

Orientation: A session held after program acceptance and before the start of the program, with the goals of welcoming participants, introducing staff, communicating expectations, and acclimating them to the grantees' Solar Pipeline Training Program and schedule.

Outreach and Recruitment Staff: A staff role responsible for generating leads and helping potential participants navigate the application process leading up to enrollment.

Outreach: Activities and strategies that are part of a comprehensive communication plan that raises general program awareness to widen participation.

Participant: An individual actively enrolled in the CEJA or FEJA workforce training programs.

Participant Skimming: Participant skimming occurs when programs only select applicants for enrollment who require fewer barrier reduction services (service needs or student support services) to boost outcome metrics or divert funding to other program activities. Applicants who meet eligibility requirements must be offered enrollment regardless of their support service needs.

Partnerships: Formally structured long-term relationships. They are typically done by entities that work together to address complex issues to achieve a shared goal. Program partners should contribute unique capabilities to the relationship to maximize outcomes. Partnerships include relationships with Local Workforce Areas, local and regional Apprenticeship Navigators and Intermediaries focused on construction and building trades, union groups, community colleges, employers, employer associations, community-based organizations, and secondary schools.

Periodic Financial Report: Standardized financial report through GATA with supporting documentation for expense submission.

Periodic Performance Report: Standardized performance report through GATA that is due within 30 days of the end of each quarter as required by the grant agreement.

Solar Pipeline Training Program Application: A standardized tool utilized by the Outreach and Recruitment staff to gather additional information and further determine eligibility for the Solar Pipeline

Training Program. This tool is found in the Reporting System and hard copy through the Solar Pipeline Training Partner Guide.

Prescreen Assessment: A set of questions asked of leads to determine basic eligibility for the Solar Pipeline Training Program. This assessment is in the Reporting System and available in hard copy in the Solar Pipeline Training Partner Guide.

Prescreen Inquiry Contact: Someone who has completed the Prescreen Assessment and is eligible to participate in the Solar Pipeline Training Program.

Professional Development: The tools, techniques, and strategies that impact the knowledge, skills, behaviors, and attitudes of grantees to improve their performance and enable them to successfully implement a Solar Pipeline Training Program. Professional Development may include webinars, regional meetings, an annual workforce summit, and program coaching.

Program Administrator: A staff role responsible for program compliance, operations management, and monitoring program performance.

Program Evaluation: Employs empirical analysis using the program and other data to describe the operation of a program, measure the program impacts on outcomes of policy and program interest, and/or determine the cost-effectiveness of the program to identify improvements, best practices, and/or what works and does not work. CEJA uses a longitudinal evaluation model that looks at all programs and their combined outcomes and impacts over time (up to ten years).

Program Improvement Plan: A plan developed by grantees that outlines their performance and action steps to improve performance even when meeting or exceeding goals, assigns staff to specific improvement tasks, and sets reasonable timelines.

Program Management: The process of directing and overseeing two or more related activities that have the same aim with the goal of compliance with program expectations, improving performance, and ensuring outcomes are met.

Program Monitoring: The associated activity for ensuring a program is making the expected incremental progress to achieve its goals within a defined timeframe.

Programmatic Risk Assessment (PRA): An assessment used to determine the barriers to the grantee's ability to execute the specified program successfully. This assessment is completed at the end of the application process, and conditions produced by it are added to the grantee's grant agreement.

R3 Areas: As established according to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (410 ILCS 705), R3 areas are geographic areas where residents have historically been excluded from economic opportunities, including opportunities in the energy sector. Eligible R3 Areas are defined in the R3 service map. Criteria for defining R3 Areas include rates of gun injury, unemployment, child poverty, incarceration with the Illinois Department of Corrections, and historic disinvestment. See the CEJA Grantee Map to locate EJ and R3 communities.

Red Flags: Warning signals that indicate a potential performance concern or need for additional services or support. Flags are in the Reporting System and are triggered when a participant status falls behind and needs immediate attention.

Recruitment: Activities and strategies focused on attracting specific students or groups that grantees are seeking to enroll in their program or to partner with.

Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP): Registered apprenticeship programs are regulated by the United States Department of Labor. RAPs includes five core components: (1) Employer Involvement – the apprentice must be employed; (2) Structured On-the-Job Learning – with mentor(s); (3) Related Training and Instruction – this can be in a classroom/conference room or online; (4) Rewards for Skill Gains – as the apprentice learns more, they are paid more; and (5) National Occupational Credential.

Retaliation: Any employer/grantee action that could discourage a reasonable employee/participant from making or supporting a charge of harassment or discrimination. For example, threatening access to service needs.

Service Needs Assessment: A tool utilized by the Barrier Reduction Service staff to inform participants of available barrier reduction services they are eligible for as a Solar Pipeline Training participant and for participants to decide on the services they need to support their success.

Stipend: An attendance-based payment made to a participant at regular intervals. A stipend is not legally considered a wage. Stipends are payments made to a trainee or learner (referenced as a participant in the Program Manual) for living expenses. They are designed to ensure that participants maintain financial solvency throughout the program. The goal of a stipend is to help participants stay financially solvent during the Solar Pipeline Training Program and to encourage retention. Stipends in the Solar Pipeline Training Program are optional.

Student Support Services: Tailored academic support that meets participants' needs to maximize their ability to succeed academically in the program and obtain the offered certifications/credentials. These supports may include tutoring, retesting, and make-up sessions, among others.

Subgrantee/Subrecipient/Subawardees: A non-state entity that receives a sub-award to carry out part or a portion of a state award. The sub-award creates an assistance relationship between the Grantee/Recipient and the Subgrantee/Subrecipient**/**Subawardee.

Technical Assistance: The process of providing targeted assistance to grantees, with the goal of program performance improvement through program development.

Training Program Life Cycle: The model utilized by CEJA workforce training programs that outlines the progression of individuals through the program from application to participation to completion.

Transition Services Staff: A staff role responsible for transitioning participants from the training program to employment and for post-completion follow-up.

Transition Services: A suite of support services designed to assist participants in successfully transitioning to a job or another training program, connecting them to employers and unions.

United States Department of Labor (DOL): The federal department, created in 1913, is responsible for promoting the working conditions of wage earners in the United States. DOL is also responsible for implementing the regulations regarding registered apprenticeship programs (RAP) throughout the United States.

Withdrawal: A program participant who was accepted into the program and accepted the offer but does not attend instruction or drops out later (and is not planning on joining again). Also applies to people who are dismissed from the program.

Wrap-around Support Services: A suite of support services designed to assist participants in successfully participating in and completing the training program. Includes all non-academic supports, including transportation, childcare, healthcare costs, and more.

Work-Based Learning and Practicums: Opportunities for participants to do work at job sites while receiving feedback from program instructors. This gives participants opportunities to put into practice what they have learned in the classroom. Also includes activities such as job shadowing and work site visits.

Work Plan: A standardized document submitted by grantees at the start of the grant agreement term that outlines outcome metrics and the timelines for enrollment, completion, and transition of participants.