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

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	John Barr (john.w.barr@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY25-2 Clean Energy Career Pathway Program
Funding Opportunity Title	Clean Energy Career and Technical Education Pilot Program
CSFA Number	420-30-3460
CSFA Popular Name	Clean Energy Career and Technical Education Pilot Program
Anticipated Number of Awards	8
Estimated Total Program Funding	$4,000,000
Award Range	$250000 - $750000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	No
Indirect Costs Allowed	Yes
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	02/10/2025
Application Date Range	02/10/2025 - 09/30/2025 : 11:59PM
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3460-2973.html
Technical Assistance Session	Offered : Yes Mandatory : No Date : 03/05/2025 : 10:00AM Registration link : https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Pages/CleanEnergyCareerPathwayNOFO.aspx

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Clean Energy Career Pathway
NOFO ID: 3460-2973

A. Program Description

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 release the second round of the Clean Energy Career Pathway Program. In 2021, Governor Pritzker signed the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act ("CEJA") to incentivize renewable energy development, accelerate electric vehicle ("EV") infrastructure, create statewide clean energy workforce training programs, and equitably support energy transitions. This grant program will be an avenue to recruit students into the fields that support in-demand jobs in the clean energy sector, allowing students to be prepared for a career leading to steady employment and a livable wage. The grant will provide funding to eligible applicants to support the development and implementation of Clean Energy Career Pathways in schools.

Program Description
The Clean Energy Career Pathway Program will provide funding directly to eligible recipients to support the planning and implementation of a Clean Energy Career Pathway. Programs will include coursework, field experiences, and work-based learning designed to prepare students for entrance into careers focusing on clean energy. To ensure equitable pathways for students, this funding opportunity seeks qualified, eligible entities working with secondary school students in partnership with Local Workforce Innovation Areas and institutions of higher education. This program will recruit students into clean energy fields (with a priority for EV occupations) and create pathways encompassing technical and employability skills with dual credit options.

The grant shall be awarded to selected applicants for a period of two years. The first year can be a planning period for grantees to establish the curriculum, modernize the classroom or provide professional development to instructors. In the second year, grantees will pilot a clean energy career pathway program focusing on occupations that support electric vehicle infrastructure. Planning periods may be less than a year if the program is ready for implementation.

Definitions:
1. **Targeted Industries, Occupations, and Growth Sectors**
Industries and occupations targeted for training programs must be related to clean energy and focused on preparing students for careers and advanced education. The priority is to support EV programs of stud, but the Department will accept application that focus on other clean energy pathway programs. An example of this could be occupations in the EV industry. Specific occupation examples for an EV target may include, but are not limited to:
   - **Hybrid Vehicle Technician**: Specializes in repairing and maintaining hybrid and electric vehicles.
   - **Electrician**: Installs and maintains EV charging stations and may work on the vehicle's internal wiring system.
   - **Machinist**: Creates and installs components for electric vehicles.
   - **Customer Service Representative**: Acts as a liaison between the client and the EV company, handling service requests and feedback.
   - Other important roles include:
      - **Engineering:** Designing the next generation of EVs and charging infrastructure.
      - **Manufacturing**: Building transportation with cutting-edge technology.
      - **Sales & Marketing**: Driving demand for EVs and educating consumers.

2. **Target Participant Population**

For this NOFO, the Department is seeking programs that deliver services to in-school youth with a priority of providing opportunities to low-income students and school districts.

In-school youth for this funding opportunity is defined as:

- Youth aged 14-21 who is attending secondary school (including alternative school) and has not received a high school diploma or equivalent

3. **Career Pathway**

The Career Pathways Dictionary defines a Career Pathway as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that aligns both vertically and horizontally across secondary education, adult education (https://pathwaysdictionary.org/glossary/adult-education/), workforce training and development, career and technical education, and postsecondary education systems, pathways, and programs.

Equity for all participants is encouraged in the dictionary through:

- Collecting, sharing, and using evidence to identify and eliminate barriers to participant access and success.
- Including shared qualitative and quantitative evaluation of participant outcomes, focusing on equity of access and services across participant groups, to inform the improvement of all programs within the pathway and the pathway itself.
- Disaggregating participant-level data to identify inequities in performance among participant groups and improve the outcomes of different participant groups.
- Including shared qualitative and quantitative evaluation of effectiveness in serving employers (the business community) to inform strategies for improvement.

This NOFO adheres to all the definitions in the Illinois Career Pathways Dictionary (https://pathwaysdictionary.org/glossary/career-pathways/). In addition, a career includes multiple entry and exit points to help individuals build their skills as they progress along a continuum of education and training and advance in sector-specific employment. The Dictionary provides the following framework for *Career Pathway Guidance:*

(A) Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the state or regional economy involved.
- Use labor market data, informed by state, regional, and local employers, to design sector-focused programs that meet the needs of the employers in the state, regional, and local economies.   - Regularly and meaningfully engage employers at every stage of pathway development in an interactive, ongoing relationship and encourage employers to assume leadership roles.   - Identify the certifications, licenses, and industry-recognized credentials that state, regional, and local employers require and craft programs leading to them.
(B) Prepares an individual to be successful in any of a full range of secondary or postsecondary education options, including apprenticeships registered under the National Apprenticeship Act.
- Enable lifelong learning that ensures youth and adult participants can gain entry to and advance, as desired, through successive education and training programs, leading to stackable credentials in a given occupational cluster.   - Lead to jobs in increasingly high-skill, high-wage, and/or in-demand industries.   - Ensure access and appropriate services for the targeted populations included in the State of Illinois Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act Unified State Plan.
(C) Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving the individual's education and career goals.

- Ensure participants have access to career exploration (https://pathwaysdictionary.org/glossary/career-exploration/), academic advising, support with transitions through the pathway, and comprehensive individualized support services, such as, but not limited to, childcare, transportation, and financial aid (where appropriate).

Involve partnerships among K-12, postsecondary educational institutions, workforce training and development agencies, public and private employers, workforce boards, human services providers, and other partners to ensure participant access to the above services.

(D) Includes, as appropriate, education offered concurrently with and in the same context as workforce preparation activities and training for a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

- Include career-focused instruction that integrates academic and technical content with foundational professional skills, which are skills needed for success in education, training, career, and life.
- Offer opportunities for work-based learning (https://www.isbe.net/Documents/Work-Based-Learning-Manual.pdf) experiences.
- Offer job placement assistant services that are tailored to participant needs at different points along the pathway.

(E) Organizes education, training, and other services to meet the particular needs of an individual in a manner that accelerates the educational and career advancement of the individual to the extent practicable.

- Offer quality, non-duplicative training, coursework, assignments, and assessments to accelerate progress, maximize credit and credential attainment, and increase student success.
- Encourage concurrent enrollment and early college (https://pathwaysdictionary.org/glossary/early-college-credit/) credit opportunities that support progression through the pathway.
- Offer participant-focused education and training that incorporates flexible class formats, locations, and times that make learning accessible and achievable for all populations. Strategies include but are not limited to, modularized curriculum, contextualized curriculum and instruction, and virtual learning.

(F) Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent and at least 1 recognized postsecondary credential.

- Create partnerships between programs that serve youth and adults of all skill levels to ensure that participants can, in time, earn a recognized postsecondary credential as desired.
- Enable participants to gain entry to or advance within a given sector or occupational cluster, facilitate efficient transitions to continuing education, and incorporate stackable and portable industry-recognized credentials.
- Facilitate co-enrollment in programs administered by the core and required partners in addition to Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program Employment & Training (SNAP E&T).

(G) Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

- Involve partnerships with employers to support participant educational and career advancement through on-the-job training, customized training, corporate training, incumbent worker training, and other work-based training strategies.
- Overcome barriers to entry to ensure that participants with diverse backgrounds and experience have the opportunity to enroll and succeed in a pathway.

4. **Training Providers**
   Eligible training providers consist of a public or private secondary or postsecondary systems, an industry association, a registered apprenticeship program, or a community-based organization that is approved to provide training services by the appropriate accrediting
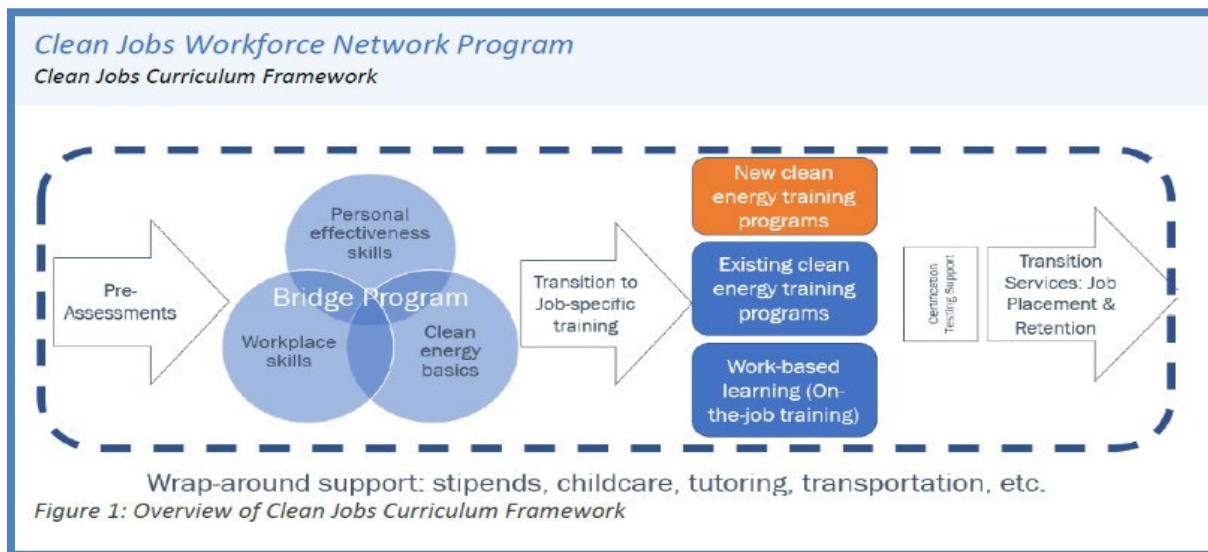
bodies. Where applicable, training providers must comply with the requirements of the Private Business and Vocational Schools Act (105 ILCS 426). Applicants must provide detailed information about the training providers, including who, what, when, where, and duration of training.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

Curriculum Alignment
The Clean Energy Career Pathways grant requires career pathway alignment. Successful applicants will demonstrate a credible model for career pathway sequencing and explain why this model is appropriate. The Department encourages applicants to incorporate the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework presented in Clean Jobs Illinois – Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program *(https://dceo.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dceo/ceja/documents/clean-jobs-curriculum-framework.pdf)*, within their curriculum design.

Figure 1: Overview of Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework

Applicants choosing not to incorporate the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework into their program, must include and demonstrate that their curriculum contains the components outlined on the next page:

Curriculum Components			Requirements
Skill Building	**Demand Industries that Result in High-Skill Occupations**	Career pathway programs for youth need to align with high-demand industries and occupations that are the priorities found in the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) and Perkins plans at the state, regional, and local levels as appropriate. (see: https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/RegPlanning).	Must state credentials earned from a recognized postsecondary entity or industry, incorporation of essential employability skills and digital literacy assessments, and the related work-based learning opportunities. Special note: organizations using
	Receipt of Recognized Credential Attainment	A credential must be one or more of the following: an industry-recognized certificate or certification, a certificate of completion of an apprenticeship or other similar programs, a license recognized by the State or Federal government, or an associate or baccalaureate degree with multiple entries and exit points and opportunities for acceleration (e.g., early college credit, competency-based education, prior learning assessment). Applicants must offer numerous testing opportunities for participants to obtain their credential or license.	
Core Curriculum	**Work-Based Learning**	Career pathway programs must include opportunities to experience the workplace through related paid or unpaid work experiences, internships, pre-apprenticeships, or apprenticeships. Additionally, models must consist of employability skills that will enhance the work- based learning experience. Resources for developing essential employability skills are included in the Illinois Essential Skills Framework and Self-Assessment (https://icsps.illinoisstate.edu/wioa/resources/2- home/63-illinois-essential-employability-skills- framework), and the Essential Employability Competencies (http://pwract.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/Recommended- Technical-and-Essential-Employability- Competencies.-April-2019.pdf) developed under the Postsecondary and Workforce Readiness Act.	Integrated Career & Academic Preparation System (ICAPS) (https://www.icapsillinois.com/)/ Integrated Education and Training (IET) or Bridge programs must be Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) approved
	Contextualized Instruction and Workplace Skills	Instruction should relate to real-world, real-life situations and experiences whereby students discover the relationships between abstract ideas and practical applications. Training should also increase digital literacy skills, specifically the ability to find, utilize, evaluate, share, and develop content using information technologies and the Internet. Application of learning with integrated content of related foundational and academic skills should be a primary focus.	
	Competencies	Curriculum core competencies must be defined. Approved curriculum will include: pre-assessments, personal effectiveness, workplace effectiveness, and clean energy basics.	The Department encourages applicants to review and adopt the framework presented in Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework *(https://dceo.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dceo/ceja/documents/clean-jobs-curriculum-framework.pdf)*.

Programs of Study

Projects should be aligned to programs of study. According to Perkins V, a program of study allows students to expand opportunities by exploring, choosing, and following career and technical career pathways that lead to valuable credentials.

Local education agencies and postsecondary institutions should offer a program of study that: incorporates challenging State academic standards;

   A. addresses both academic and technical knowledge and skills, including employability skills;
   B. is aligned with the needs of industries in the economy of the State, region, Tribal community, or local area;
   C. progresses in specificity (beginning with all aspects of an industry or career cluster and leading to more occupation-specific instruction);
   D. has multiple entry and exit points incorporating credentialing, culminating in attaining a recognized postsecondary credential.
   (Source: Perkins Collaborative Resource Network - https://cte.ed.gov/)

Program Implementation

The projects selected for funding through this NOFO will aim to increase career pathway opportunities for in-school youth in the clean energy sector. Strategies must be flexible enough to allow participating students to accomplish goals. Services described in the application must infuse equity into all aspects of program delivery, as outlined below:

1. Equity Focused Program Culture	Applicants must provide information about how their program models (including recruitment, partnerships, training, and barrier-reducing supportive services) consider the background and experience of target populations in the industry (hiring, advancement, retention, and earnings). Competitive applications will demonstrate how the program will increase access, enrollment, completion and retention of program participants. Competitive applications will demonstrate how the program will prepare or advance digital skill acquisition commensurate with the targeted industry or industries (digital literacy, digital confidence, digital competence, digital use, and advanced digital skills). Finally, applicants must outline strategies for fostering a shared identity in the program and a welcoming, inclusive environment. The focus on equity should be evident in all aspects of program design and partnerships, including successful transition and retention.
2. Outreach and Recruitment	Applicants must outline proactive recruitment and outreach strategies to enroll youth in their programs and explain how they will be equitable and inclusive of potentially eligible participants. The outreach plan should reflect methods to connect with the targeted and priority populations. Outreach strategies must be designed based on cultural relevance and acknowledge occupation disparities to help applicants make informed decisions about their participation.
3. Employer Engagement	Businesses are best suited to ensure that program content meets their needs for a skilled workforce. Therefore, employers should be leaders in developing and supporting career pathway programs that integrate work-based learning opportunities. Competitive projects will provide evidence of this business commitment and include strategies demonstrating how employers are engaged in this process.
4. Career Planning	Career planning is a customer-centered approach to delivering services to prepare and coordinate comprehensive career (employment) plans for youth, ensuring access to workforce activities and supportive services during program participation and continuing for one (1) year of follow-up. Successful career planning is a collaborative, ongoing process rather than a one-time activity. The process is individualized to the job seeker, preparing them for employment that leads to self-sufficiency and places them on a path for lifelong learning.

5. Comprehensive Assessment	A thorough assessment is the foundation for understanding the participant's employment goals, existing skills, and career readiness and determining all possible barriers to employment. It is not a one-time activity. Nor is it a one-size-fits-all approach. Assessments help prepare participants to determine existing skills, identify those that require additional training, develop an employment plan, and connect them to services through appropriate referrals. At a minimum, the assessment process must be appropriate for the participant and address the areas below to inform the employment plan.
6. Individual Service Strategy (ISS)	Like the assessment, the Individual Service Strategy (ISS) is a living document that identifies employment and education goals as part of a career pathway, objectives, and the appropriate combination of services for the participant to reach the goals. The ISS is the basic instrument for the grantee to document the appropriateness of the decisions made about the combination of services for the participant, including referrals to other programs for specified activities. It is to be developed collaboratively with the participant to establish mutual goals. The ISS must be developed after an objective assessment and reflect the expressed interests and needs of the participant.
7. Supportive Services / Barrier Reduction Services	Supportive Services provide participants with key assistance beyond career and training services necessary to achieve success. Barrier reduction funding covers accumulated emergency costs for basic needs, transportation, digital technology needs, education needs, mental health services, disabilities, juvenile records, and childcare.
8. Placement	The placement of program participants in jobs or post-secondary education is one of the primary goals of the Clean Energy Pathway Program. Successful applicants will utilize several placement services, including: - Outreach and networking with local employers on their anticipated employment needs; - Outreach from post-secondary education partners regarding pathway options. - Engaging businesses in hiring and recruiting events and collaborating with workforce partners, including training providers and Chambers of Commerce, to identify employment opportunities. Using the Virtual Job Fair site in Illinois workNet to connect students with employers.
9. Follow-Up	Follow-up services must meet the needs of the participant and may include, but are not limited to the following: - Supportive services or Barrier Reduction services; - Mentoring; - Financial literacy education; - Services that provide labor market and employment information about in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the local area, such as career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services; - Providing individuals with information about additional educational or employment opportunities, including digital literacy, digital confidence, competency, and use training; - Counseling individuals about the workplace; - Contacting individuals or employers to verify employment; - Contacting individuals or employers to help secure better-paying jobs, additional career planning, and counseling for the individual; - Assisting individuals and employers in resolving work-related problems; - Connecting individuals to peer support groups; and Providing individuals with referrals to other community resources.

Performance Goals and Measures

Grantees will be required to report performance data on the following activities and outcomes:

- Number of youth enrolled in the program
- Number of youth completing the program
- Number of youth obtaining credential(s)
- Number of youth that are placed in unsubsidized employment
  (*Note: Unsubsidized Employment - employment in the private or public sector for which the employer does not receive a subsidy from public funds to offset all or a part of the wages and costs of employing an individual.*)

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing state funds appropriated by the General Assembly in Public Act 103-0589. Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is $4,000,000. Awards will range from $250,000 to $750,000. The Department expects to make 8-15 awards through this NOFO.

Anticipated start date for awards is July 1, 2025. The period of performance is expected to be July 1, 2025 through June 30, 2027.

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

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/individuals/international-taxpayers/taxpayer-identification-numbers-tin#:~:text=You%20can%20use%20the%20IRS%27s,for%20Individual%20Taxpayer%20Identification%20Number***);
- 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 (verified at ***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 (verified once entity is registered in GATA Grantee Portal); and
- 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). A federal Debarred and Suspended status cannot be remediated.

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.

1. **Eligible Applicants include:**

Eligible entities for this NOFO are defined as Regional Offices of Education (ROEs); Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs); state institutions of higher education; schools designated as laboratory schools, public university laboratory schools approved by the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE); area vocational centers; charter schools; cooperatives and other joint agreements with a governing body or board of control; schools operated by an ROE, ISC, or state agency; and school districts eligible applicants include, but are not limited to industry associations, Regional Offices of Education (ROEs); Intermediate Service Centers (ISCs); community-based organizations, including faith-based organizations; or Indian tribes or tribal organizations (as defined in the federal Indian Self-Determination and Education Assistance Act). Entities that are approved shall be responsible for ensuring that they have facilities available and educators who are appropriately trained on use of any technologies or devices acquired for the purposes of the grant. Collaborative applications will be accepted. Eligible Applicants must partner with a Community College, a Local Workforce Innovation Area, and employers to pilot clean the energy pathway programs.

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.).

2. **Cost Sharing or Matching.**

Matching funds are not required; however, projects that include matching or leveraged funds from multiple funding sources will be given priority consideration.

3. **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.

4. 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.

5. Other, if applicable.

Applicants may submit one application for this opportunity.

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:

> Shannon Hampton
> Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
> 1011 S. 2nd St.
> Springfield, IL
> Email: Shannon.B.Hampton@illinois.gov

2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

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

☐ Uniform Grant Application in fillable PDF format. Signature page must be printed, signed, scanned and submitted with application.
☐ Uniform Budget utilizing the template provided by DCEO for this project. The entire budget with all worksheets included even if the worksheets are not relevant to the

grant opportunity must be submitted with the application materials. Signature page must be printed, signed, scanned and submitted with application.
- ☐ Conflict of Interest Disclosure
- ☐ Mandatory Disclosures

This Notice of Funding Opportunity also requires the **submission of the following other programmatic specific items**:

- ☐ Program Application
- ☐ Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) or Partnership Agreements (if applicable)

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.

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

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or Federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 CFR 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the Federal or State awarding agency under 2 CFR 25.110(d)) is required to:

(i)   Be registered in SAM. To establish a SAM registration, go to www.SAM.gov and/or utilize this instructional link: How to Register in SAM from the www.grants.illinois.gov Resource Links tab. SAM.gov registrations must be "public."
(ii)   Provide a valid UEI number in the GATA Grantee Portal registration.
(iii)   Continue to maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active Federal, Federal pass-through or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a Federal or State awarding agency. The Department will 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 the Department is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the Department 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.

4. **Submission Dates and Times.**

Applications for this opportunity will be accepted on a first come first served bases until an award is established for this NOFO. Applications submitted by April 1, 2025 will be included in the first merit review cycle. Only those applications received by April 1, 2025 will be reviewed during the first merit review cycle.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/b3ffbf16ca434333a1899e740a2beade

The Department is under 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.

5. **Intergovernmental Review, if applicable.**

N/A

6. **Funding Restrictions.**

This opportunity does allow reimbursement of pre-award costs. Other restrictions can be found in Sections A., B., and C.

7. Other Submission Requirements.

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

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

E. Application Review Information

1. Criteria.

Grant proposals will be reviewed on a competitive basis. Each proposal will be scored on a 100 point scale with an opportunity to gain up to 9 priority points (See application). The threshold for not recommending funding is set by the Department. The Department shall consider the following criteria when evaluating the application submittal: Capacity, Need, Program Plan, and Budget. The sections list the evaluating criteria and description on what will be evaluated for each section. The application correlates with the criteria.

Capacity	An objective of this Clean Energy Career Pathways Funding Opportunity is to develop clean energy career pathways for secondary school students who transition into post-secondary programs of study. This program will strictly focus on clean energy sectors and provide both education and training for in-school youth. Therefore, the applicant must provide evidence of their capacity to partner with employers in the targeted industries and serve the targeted youth populations. Additionally, this includes identifying the expertise of staff and subcontracted personnel to demonstrate their ability to implement the program. Examples of current or completed projects similar in scope for these individuals should be provided. Finally, the applicant must demonstrate the ability to run successful training programs that include relationships with key stakeholders. Stakeholders include eligible training providers, social service agencies, and community-based organizations that will influence the training and wraparound services for a holistic service approach. The applicant must be an Eligible Applicant as set forth in section C.1 of this NOFO
Need	Applications must identify the area and populations served. The need for a clean energy program should be clear. The expected amount of low-income students to be served should also be stated. The applicant prioritizes services in the Qualified Census Tract (QCT), Disproportionately Impacted Area (DIA) or rural communities where customers will be recruited from and/or the project will operate and the specific locations where the training will be offered. Training programs developed must be informed by local labor market information (LMI). Applicants should include the analysis of data that determined the needs of employers and individuals served under this program. Applicants should include the specific needs of the industry(s) and related occupations and the impact the training will have on meeting those needs. Applicants must include information on how the data is utilized to develop sector-based career pathways and how other resources support this approach. Applicants must identify the specific needs of businesses and the needs of individuals, including barriers to employment.

Program Plan	The program plan section of the application template includes overall operational components. In the application template, applicants will provide a high-level program summary. The summary needs to be comprehensive but concise and should be written so the public can understand the program's intent. Applicants must include the role of local businesses, the local workforce system, and other key stakeholders in developing and delivering services including job placement, retention, and follow-up services. Additionally, the application must include a list of the training providers, the credentialing body, and information on the training materials used and how they relate to the targeted industry sector and employers. The Department may request training materials during the evaluation process. In this section, applicants indicate what targeted populations will be served and describe the customer flow from outreach to employment or post-secondary education.
Budget	Applicants must provide a high-level budget narrative, include a thorough line-item budget breakdown with reasonable costs, and provide a detailed narrative of each line-item cost. This will correlate with the narrative in the budget template. Applicants must describe any leveraged and matching funds from partners and participating businesses.) Lastly, applicants must explain how this project will be sustained beyond the grant funding period. Discuss how this project will benefit the target industries and target population and community.

Rubric: When completing the Clean Energy Career Pathway NOFO application, refer to the criteria rubric to ensure submissions are adhering to the scoring standards.

CAPACITY – 35 Possible Points
1. The applicant provides high-level information about the lead applicant organization's size, structure, and history, including the applicant's capacity to provide services outlined in the NOFO and successfully complete the project tasks within the proposed grant period.
2. The applicant describes program accessibility, including a mode of delivery and/or additional initiatives the applicant will implement to make the program accessible to potential candidates.
3. The applicant describes experience working with school districts, Regional Offices of Education, early learning centers, co-operatives, community colleges, and employers.
4. The applicant's previous performance in administering similar grants and projects.
5. The applicant provides details about the partnering entities for this project. (Include MOUs or letters of intent as attachments)
6. An equity lens is a process that analyzes the impact of policies and practices on marginalized communities to inform and ensure equitable outcomes. The applicant provides information demonstrating the applicant team's experience with and ability to use an equity lens. There is evidence that equity is embedded in all aspects of program design and partnerships, including successful transition and retention.
7. The applicant describes the process for developing the staffing capacity to administer the program proposed in this application successfully. (Aligns with Staffing Plan Chart)
NEED – 15 Possible Points
1. The applicant describes the need for this program and demonstrates the prioritization of services for low-income students. Services are prioritized in the Qualified Census Tract (QCT), Disproportionately Impacted Area (DIA) or rural communities where customers will be recruited from and/or the project will operate and the specific locations where the training will be offered. https://www.illinoisworknet.com/qctdiamap.
2. The applicant identifies appropriate services in target industries and occupations as informed by labor market analysis, regional workforce data, Local Workforce Innovation Area (LWIA) local/region workforce plan, and employer needs information.
3. The applicant describes the plan for providing appropriate supportive and barrier reduction services to ensure participants can complete the clean energy career pathway.
PROGRAM PLAN – 40 Possible Points
1. The applicant describes the overview of the program in its entirety. (The elevator pitch)
2. The applicant has a comprehensive plan for outreach and recruitment strategies to connect with all participants.
3. The applicant describes how the program incorporates essential employability skills, financial literacy, digital literacy, and occupational skills training.
4. The applicant describes the education and training services included in the program plan. The applicant includes industry-recognized credentials for in-demand occupations and describes the curriculum.
5. The quality of the curriculum outlined in the curriculum tool worksheet.
6. The quality of the program plan worksheet.
7. The applicant describes how this pathway program is aligned for a successful transition into post-secondary programs of study or employment.
8. The quality of the program's performance measures and targets.
BUDGET NARRATIVE/COST EFFECTIVENESS – 10 Possible Points
1. The applicant adequately details the reasonableness of the proposed costs in relation to planned outcomes and proposed activities.
2. The applicant's sustainability plan demonstrates that the grant partners are connected, and the roles and responsibilities between team members are established to support the long-term success of the program.

2. 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 based on the evaluation committee's merit review of the applications and the development of a funding recommendation. Decisions to award grants and the funding levels will be determined based on the applicant's response and compliance with the requirements of this NOFO. The Merit Review Team and DCEO may consider the geographic distribution of awards throughout the state in making final funding decisions. Selected applications will enter into negotiations with the Department for a grant. The purpose of negotiations will be to arrive at acceptable grant terms, including budget and scope of work revisions, at which time the final decision will be made to award a grant.

The Merit Based Review process is subject to appeal. 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 in writing to the Department within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published. The written appeal shall include the name and address of the appealing party, the identification of the grant and a statement of reasons for the appeal. To file an appeal, applicants must submit the appeal in writing and in accordance with the Merit-Based Application Review Appeals Process listed on the Grant Opportunities page of the DCEO website: https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/meritappreview.html.

3. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates, if applicable.

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

2. 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).

3. **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).

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

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

H. Other Information, if applicable

Submission of an application confers no right to an award or a subsequent grant agreement. The Department is not obligated to award any grants under this program, pay any costs incurred by the applicant to prepare and submit an application or pay any grant-related expenses incurred before the start date to grant. All decisions of the Department are final.

Resources: Below are items that applicants can use to help create their program.
*   Illinois State Board of Education College and Career Pathway Endorsements (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/College-and-Career-Pathway-Endorsement.aspx)
*   Career Pathways Dictionary (https://pathwaysdictionary.org/)

- Illinois State Board of Education Work-Based Learning (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/CTE-Work- Based-Learning.aspx)
- Program of Study (https://www.isbe.net/Pages/CTEProgStudy.aspx)

Additional Assessments: Applicants will be requested to complete a programmatic risk assessment to consider grant-specific risks. This assessment will be administered towards the end of the application process by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity. Program staff will then determine whether any risk-based conditions from the programmatic risk assessment and the internal controls questionnaire (completed as part of the State of Illinois GATA registration) shall be incorporated into a grant Agreement.

Technical Assistance: Before applying for funding, several Technical Assistance (T.A.) sessions will be available on various topics. All applicants are encouraged to attend the sessions. The information for T.A. sessions will be posted at:
(https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Pages/CleanEnergyCareerPathwayNOFO.aspx).

The recording from the first TA session that was held on October 23, 2024 is posted here:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYocOqhpz0rGtVC1bMNjKwR3mgBJvvS7dvY.

The first TA session for this round will be on March 5, 2025 at 10 a.m. The link to sign up for TA sessions and office hours can be found here:
https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Pages/CleanEnergyCareerPathwayNOFO.aspx

Once a grant is established, participation in T.A. is required and will be provided throughout the grant period (in the form of webinars, regional meetings, and direct support). The T.A. schedule will be available and regularly updated on the site at WIOA
(https://www.illinoisworknet.com/WIOA/Pages/CleanEnergyCareerPathwayNOFO.aspx).

Successful applicants must agree to receive consultation technical assistance from authorized representatives of the Department. The applicant and collaborating partners will have required site visits, training, and in-person interviews. Successful applicants must attend webinars and training as scheduled and provided by the Department or a subcontractor of the Department and must budget accordingly.

Feedback on Program Design and NOFO Requirements: This NOFO is to support the Clean Energy Career Pathway Program. The Department welcomes written feedback regarding the effectiveness of the program design and the requirements outlined in this NOFO.