

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

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	Chase Martin (chase.martin2@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY25-1
Funding Opportunity Title	Future Energy Jobs Act Craft Apprenticeship Program
CSFA Number	420-30-2863
CSFA Popular Name	Craft Apprenticeship Program
Anticipated Number of Awards	1
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$3,000,000
Award Range	Not Applicable
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	No
Indirect Costs Allowed	Yes
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	03/21/2025
Application Date Range	03/21/2025 - 05/05/2025 : 11:59PM
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/2863-2977.html
Technical Assistance Session	Offered : Yes Mandatory : No Date : 04/04/2025 : 1:00PM Registration link : https://illinoisstate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oXP3GTpDQiOXJ_1MuhCG0g

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Future Energy Jobs Act Craft Apprenticeship Program

NOFO ID: 2863-2977

For information about grants please visit <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/granteeresources.html>.

***REVISED 4/11/25 – to clarify the initial term of the grant award, the budget submission requirements, and the project work plan submission requirements.**

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 identify the organization that will coordinate a statewide Craft Apprenticeship Program that will support registered apprenticeship programs associated with the electric industry that may, but need not, be related to solar installation.

Program Description

Among the goals of the Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA) and Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) is to stimulate job growth in the clean energy economy with investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy. This program is designed to support employment in the electric industry, including electricians and electric line installers and repairers throughout the State of Illinois.

The Department seeks proposals that meet the specifications outlined in this NOFO to develop career pathways, provide training and establish apprenticeships in the electric industry, including but not limited to, the solar industry in Illinois. The selected grantee will have the capability to administer a statewide program that may include the coordination of project activities with regional and statewide partners. The goal of this NOFO is to identify a grantee to coordinate statewide job training activities in accredited or otherwise recognized apprenticeship programs that will:

- Develop and support career pathways in the electric industry, including but not limited to, those enabled by FEJA and CEJA.
- Provide training on the requisite knowledge, skills, experience, and competencies to design, install, inspect and/or service electric equipment and/or systems.
- Provide apprenticeship participants with the foundational knowledge necessary for a career within the electric industry, including but not limited to the solar industry and provide diverse low-income, or economically disadvantaged populations with additional craft apprenticeship opportunities.
- Develop, coordinate and implement training activities that result in Registered Apprenticeships, Pre-Apprenticeships, and Youth Apprenticeships in the electric industry as defined in the Illinois Career Pathway Dictionary and outlined below.

Definitions

The State of Illinois will follow the definitions established by the Career Pathways Dictionary for this NOFO (https://www.illinoisworknet.com/DownloadPrint/CP_Dictionary_11-13-18__FINAL.PDF).

“*Career Pathways*” is defined as a combination of rigorous and high-quality education, training, and other services that:

- Aligns with the skill needs of industries in the economy of the State or regional economy involved.
- 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, 29 USC § 50.
- Includes counseling to support an individual in achieving their education and career goals.
- 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.

- 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.
- Enables an individual to attain a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent, and at least one recognized postsecondary credential.
- Helps an individual enter or advance within a specific occupation or occupational cluster.

“Climate Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) Programs.” Workforce and clean energy infrastructure development programs authorized by the Climate Equitable Jobs Act (P.A. 102-662); Program grantees will coordinate directly with grantees of the Illinois Energy Transition Navigators Program (20 ILCS 730/5-35) and Returning Residents Program (20 ILCS 730/5-50).

“Displaced Energy Worker”: An energy worker who has lost employment or is anticipated by the Department to lose employment within the next 5 years, due to the reduced operation or closure of a fossil fuel power plant, nuclear power plant, or coal mine.

“English Language Learner / Individual with Low Levels of Literacy”: An individual that has limited ability in reading, writing, speaking, or comprehending the English language and whose native language is a language other than English or who lives in a family or community environment where a language other than English is the dominant language; is unable to read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, or in the individual’s family, or in society; or perceives him or herself as possessing attitudes, beliefs, customs or practices that influence a way of thinking, acting, or working that may serve as a hindrance to employment.

“Equity investment eligible communities” are the geographic areas throughout Illinois that would most benefit from equitable investments by the State, which are designed to combat discrimination and foster sustainable economic growth. Specifically, equity investment eligible communities include the following areas:

- Restore, Reinvest and Renew Areas (R3 Areas) as established pursuant to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act (410 ILCS 705), where residents have historically been excluded from economic opportunities, including opportunities in the energy sector. Eligible R3 Areas are defined in the R3 service map (<https://r3.illinois.gov/eligibility>). Criteria for defining R3 Areas include rates of gun injury, unemployment, child poverty, incarceration with Illinois Department of Corrections, and historic disinvestment; and
- Environmental justice communities, as defined by the Illinois Power Agency pursuant to the Illinois Power Agency Act (20 ILCS 3855), but excluding racial and ethnic indicators, where residents have historically been subject to disproportionate pollution burdens, including pollution from the energy sector.
- The Equity Investment Eligible Community Map ([Arcg.is/1Wvv4X](https://arcg.is/1Wvv4X)) defines the areas that satisfy the criteria above for both R3 Areas and Environmental justice communities.

“Equity investment eligible person” or “eligible person” is a person who would most benefit from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination and foster sustainable economic growth. Specifically, eligible persons mean:

- persons whose primary residence is in an equity investment eligible community; or
- persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system; or
- persons who were formerly incarcerated.

“Low Educational Attainment”: Individuals that have limited education attainment and are basic skills deficient where the individual has English, reading, writing, or computing skills at or below the 8th grade level on a generally accepted standardized test; or the individual is unable to compute or solve problems, or read, write, or speak English, at a level necessary to function on the job.

“Low Income Household”: Persons and families whose gross income does not exceed 80% of area median income, adjusted for family size based on the data published most recently by the U.S.

Department of Housing and Urban Development. See the income eligibility lookup tool here:
<https://www.illinoissfa.com/income-eligibility-lookup-tool/>

"Person with a Record" Defined by 220 ILCS 5/16-108.12 as any person who (1) has been convicted of a crime in this State or of an offense in any other jurisdiction, not including an offense or attempted offense that would subject a person to registration under the Sex Offender Registration Act; (2) has a record of an arrest or an arrest that did not result in conviction for any crime in this State or of an offense in any other jurisdiction; or (3) has a juvenile delinquency adjudication.

"Pre-apprenticeship": Defined by the Illinois Workforce Innovation Board as programs that are designed to prepare individuals to enter and succeed in apprenticeship programs or in another career pathway approach. Pre-apprenticeship programs have the following core elements:

- *Inclusive Recruitment of Underrepresented Individuals*: Pre-apprenticeship programs offer a career pathway and focus on recruiting historically underrepresented individuals (both in employment programs and in the industry sectors) to ensure diversity, access, and inclusion in both pre-apprenticeship programs and in various industries. Historically underrepresented populations include but are not limited to: underrepresented racial/ethnic persons and women, out of school youth, veterans, returning citizens, and individuals with disabilities.
- *Industry-Focused Curriculum & Training*: Pre-Apprenticeship curriculum and training are designed to provide pre-apprentices with the knowledge and skills to prepare them for success in an industry-focused apprenticeship program or in other career pathway approaches. Curricula are strategically designed with employers and industry representatives to prepare participants to meet entry-level requirements of an apprenticeship program. The curriculum should incorporate the Illinois Essential Employability Skills Framework as well as contextualized instruction for any basic knowledge and skills (e.g. mathematics, literacy, etc.) necessary to succeed in further apprenticeship training.
- *Hands-On Learning/Work Based Learning*: Programming includes practical and meaningful hands-on learning activities that are connected to the occupation, curriculum, and training activities such as Career Exploration and Career Development Experiences. Learning activities also reinforce foundational professional skills outlined in the Essential Employability Skills framework (personal and work ethic, teamwork, communication, etc.). Quality pre-apprenticeships provide hands on training to individuals in a workplace, simulated lab experience, or work-based learning environment, which does not supplant a paid employee, but effectively simulates the industry and occupational conditions and standards of the partnering registered apprenticeship programs (RAPs) while observing proper supervision and safety protocols.
- *Retention Services For Successful Participation and Completion*: Retention Support Services can increase retention, reduce barriers, and assist participants in persisting through the program. Providers work directly with participants to identify any barriers to program participation, completion, and employment they may experience, and provide participants with supportive services and community resources such as educational & career counseling, financial literacy, and wrap-around services to address and minimize those barriers. Providers monitor retention and may provide ongoing support to pre-apprenticeship completers, such as mentorship or alumni support, as they progress along their career pathway.
- *Partnerships with Employers and Connections to Apprenticeship Programs*: Pre-apprenticeship programs have documented partnerships with employers as well as apprenticeship programs. Pre-apprenticeship programs support participants as they apply for a Registered or Non-Registered Apprenticeship program. Pre-apprenticeship participants may receive preference for enrollment or priority placement in some apprenticeship programs. If a participant does not seek an apprenticeship or secure employment upon completion, providers should support the participant to related entry-level employment or additional education and training opportunities along their career pathway. Quality pre-apprenticeship programs should be designed and delivered, with input from at least one RAP sponsor. A pre-apprenticeship program's educational and pre-vocational services must prepare individuals to meet the entry requisites of one or more RAPs and occupations.

- *Strive for Credential Acquisition:* Pre-Apprenticeship programs' training and hands-on-experience are designed to develop participants' essential and technical skills in preparation for apprenticeship programs and/or sector-specific job opportunities with sustainable wages. Emerging best practice for pre-apprenticeship programs include participants acquiring a credential during the pre-apprenticeship program. Emerging definitions for industry-recognized, non-degree, or alternative credentials may include but not be limited to certifications, certificates, credentials, or degrees.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Pre-apprenticeship programs that are funded through this NOFO must meet this definition and be consistent with the requirement of Training and Employment Notice No. 23-23 <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/eta/advisories/ten-23-23>. Pre-apprenticeships programs will not be funded by this NOFO if there is not an existing registered apprenticeship program(s) or a registered apprenticeship program(s) that is developed within the grant period. Before pre-apprentices are enrolled in their programs, the RAP must be in development with at least one employer.

“Registered Apprenticeship”: Defined by the Office of Apprenticeship of the U.S. Department of Labor, Registered Apprenticeship programs (RAPs) are an industry-driven, high-quality career pathway where employers can develop and prepare their future workforce, and individuals can obtain paid work experience, receive progressive wage increases, classroom instruction, and a portable, nationally recognized credential. Registered Apprenticeships are industry-vetted and approved and validated by the U.S. Department of Labor. The elements of US DOL Registered Apprenticeships outlined at 29 C.F.R § 29 include the following:

- *Industry Led:* Programs are industry-vetted and approved to ensure alignment with industry standards and that apprentices are trained for highly skilled, high-demand occupations.
- *Paid Job:* Apprenticeships are jobs! Apprentices earn progressive wage as their skills and productivity increase.
- *Structured On-the-Job Learning/Mentorship:* Programs provide structured on-the-job training to prepare for a successful career, which includes instruction from an experienced mentor.
- *Supplemental Education:* Apprentices are provided supplemental classroom education based on the employers unique training needs to ensure quality and success.
- *Diversity:* Programs are designed to reflect the communities in which they operate through strong non-discrimination, anti-harassment, and recruitment practices to ensure access, equity, and inclusion.
- *Quality & Safety:* Apprentices are afforded worker protections while receiving rigorous training to equip them with the skills they need to succeed and the proper training and supervision they need to be safe.
- *Credentials:* Apprentices earn a portable, nationally recognized credential within their industry.

“Related Instruction / Related Technical Instruction / Supplemental Education”: As defined by US DOL's Apprenticeship Requirements Reference Guide

(<https://www.apprenticeship.gov/sites/default/files/apprenticeship-requirements-reference-guide.pdf>), related instruction is an organized and systematic form of instruction designed to provide the apprentice with the knowledge of the theoretical and technical subjects related to the apprentice's occupation.

- A minimum of 144 hours for each year of apprenticeship is recommended.
- This instruction may be accomplished through media such as classroom, occupational or industry courses, electronic media, or other instruction.

Target Program Participants

The targeted program participants that are served under this NOFO align with the priorities of FEJA and CEJA to provide statewide access to quality training, jobs, and economic opportunities across the clean energy sector. Applicants should prioritize serving equity investment eligible persons and individuals who face barriers to employment such as low educational attainment, English language learner / individuals

with low levels of literacy, individuals from low-income households, individuals from environmental justice communities and displaced energy workers as defined above.

Target Industry

The Department is seeking a grantee to coordinate a statewide program that will provide individuals with training and employment opportunities in the electric industry that may, but need not, be related to the solar industry. The successful applicant must demonstrate that they have a direct connection to the electric industry in Illinois.

Program Partners

All applicants must have a written agreement with the project partners that clearly outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner and lists their funding contribution. Applicants that enter into partnership agreements with training providers should include details regarding the training program including the length, location, class size, cost, and other important information.

Program Training Models

Illinois businesses are fueled by human capital and talent. Illinois jobseekers and workers should have every opportunity to achieve career success through aligned education, training, and employment programs. Through strategies focused on understanding employers and their need for talent, the workforce system can broadcast those skill competencies and credential requirements to skill providers, such as trade unions, community colleges, community-based organizations, business associations, and other training programs. Applicants are encouraged to develop program activities that are focused on developing an apprenticeship pipeline in the electric industry. Applicants must develop a statewide career pathways program that includes the following training models/activities as a part of this award:

Develop, Coordinate and Support Registered Apprenticeships

Apprenticeship is an industry- driven, high-quality career pathway in which workers can obtain paid work experience, classroom instruction, and a transferable credential while job creators develop and prepare their future workforce. Apprenticeship programs enable job creators to develop and train their future workforce while offering career seekers affordable paths to secure high-paying jobs. Apprenticeship programs are distinguished from other types of workplace training models by several factors:

- Apprentices are paid by their employers during training.
- Apprenticeship programs provide on-the-job learning and job-related classroom training.
- On-the-job learning is conducted in the work setting under the direction of a mentor(s); and
- Training results in an industry-recognized and portable credential.
- Apprenticeship is a flexible training model that can be customized to meet the needs of every business and industry.

Develop, Coordinate and Support Pre-Apprenticeships

It is recognized that pre-apprenticeship programs are needed to ensure access for individuals that are not fully prepared for a registered apprenticeship program. This NOFO will support pre-apprenticeship programs that lead to a Registered Apprenticeship Program.

Develop, Coordinate and Support Career Pathways

It is recognized that having a strong youth-apprenticeship infrastructure is needed to provide opportunities for youth to enter into a career pathway. This NOFO will support career pathway activities that are focused on supporting qualified workers that enter Pre-apprentice and Registered Apprenticeship Programs.

Award Term: The grant term/performance period is determined on a project-specific basis. It is anticipated that this grant will be awarded for 24 months with one 12-month renewal option.

Program History

In 2017, the Illinois Commerce Commission approved ComEd's first award of \$3 million under the FEJA Craft Apprenticeship Program [see Illinois Commerce Commission order 17-0332]. The administration of the programs authorized under the FEJA were assigned to the Illinois Department of Commerce in 2022 through CEJA [see Public Act 102-662].

Performance Goals and Measures

Specific project outcomes, goals, and deliverables must be included in the proposal. Agreed upon deliverables and outcomes will be tracked utilizing project management tools developed by the Department and Illinois workNet. Grant applications must include the projected outcomes that are consistent with the program design and definitions. Applicants are required to provide information regarding projected outcomes as part of the required attachments. Program Outcomes may include:

- Total Number of Participants Recruited
- Total Number of Participants Enrolled
- Number of Participants Placed in a Registered Apprenticeship
- Number of Participants that Transition from a Pre-Apprenticeship Program to a Registered Apprenticeship
- Number of Participants Enrolled in a Pre-Apprenticeship Program
- Number of Participants Enrolled in a Career Pathway Program

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing state funds appropriated by the Illinois Future Energy Jobs Act as outlined at 220 ILCS 5/16-108.12 and 20 ILCS 3855/1-75(c)(1)(O). Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is \$3 million through a single award. The Department expects to make one award through this NOFO.

Anticipated start date for award is June 1, 2025. The period of performance is expected to be June 1, 2025 through May 31, 2026 with a renewal option of an additional 24 months based on the grantee performance. **For the purpose of this NOFO, applicants are requested to submit a one-year budget. The project workplan should include Participant Outcomes (Attachment 2) and Goal & Activity Timeline (Attachment 6) for the first year of the grant.**

Allowable Costs: Costs charged to the grant must be necessary, reasonable, and allocable based on activities contained in the scope of work.

Administrative Cost: It is expected that administrative costs, both direct and indirect, will represent a small portion (generally around 10%) of the program budget. Program budgets and narratives will detail how all proposed expenditures are directly necessary for program implementation.

Grant Award and Payment Terms: The successful applicant will be invited to negotiate a grant with the Department. The executed grant agreement will specify conditions for payment and a payment schedule. In general, the grantee will receive payments on a reimbursement basis and may be subject to proration dependent upon the grantee meeting performance targets. The grant will have enrollment and outcome goals based on the grant scope of work.

Renewals / Previous Apprenticeship Expansion Grants: The Department may authorize the renewal of projects awarded under this NOFO including additional funding based on the activities, outcomes, and performance of the grant as well as the availability of funds under this program.

Agreement(s) and budget(s) with subrecipients and subcontractors must be pre-approved by and on file with DCEO. 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).

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:

This funding opportunity is available to Illinois-based public or private organizations that meet the requirements outlined in this NOFO.

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 funds will be awarded more points in the merit review process. The successful applicant will be required to report the matching and/or leveraged funds from partners over the life of the project. There is no minimum requirement, but applications will be reviewed in part based upon their ability to leverage additional funding sources, which should be clearly described in the budget proposal.

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 an 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.

Freedom of Information Act/Confidential Information: Applications 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 reasonably be considered to be proprietary, privileged, or confidential commercial or financial information should be identified as such in the application. The Department will maintain the confidentiality of that information only to the extent permitted by law.

Applicant Rights: Submission of an application confers no right to an award or to a subsequent grant agreement. The Department is not obligated to award any grants under this program, to pay any costs incurred by the applicant in the preparation and submission of an application or pay any grant-related costs incurred prior to the grant beginning date. Applicants may utilize the appeal process as stated in the Merit-Based Review Policy available in the Resource Library at www.grants.illinois.gov.

Program Eligibility Criteria: All applicants must follow the program design and approaches outlined in Part A of this NOFO.

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:

Chase Martin
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
Email: chase.martin2@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 as part of the program application:**

- ☐ **TECHNICAL PROPOSAL** (not to exceed 20 pages): Using the provided Formatted Grant Technical Proposal, provide a narrative in the boxes provided describing the program activities and outcomes that this grant will support as guided. This includes the following:
 - Section 1: Applicant Organization Capacity (approximately 3-4 pages)
 - Section 2: Documentation of Need (approximately 2-3 pages)
 - Section 3: Project Plan and Quality (approximately 8-12 pages)

- Section 4: Cost Efficiency (approximately 2-3 pages)
- **PROJECT WORKPLAN:** Applicants are required to complete and submit the Excel Project Workplan Template with all attachments listed below that are available on the NOFO website.
 - Attachment 1: PROJECT SUMMARY: The overview is a quick summary of the project along with the Grantee name and information.
 - Attachment 2: PARTICIPANT INFO & OUTCOMES: Grant application must include projected participant outcomes. Competitive proposals will clearly articulate how the activities funded under this NOFO will significantly increase participation of underserved populations in US DOL-registered apprenticeship programs in Illinois.
 - Attachment 3: RAP TRAINING INFO: Grant application must include a high-level overview of supplemental training and OJT for RAPs.
 - Attachment 4: PRE-APPRENTICESHIP TRAINING INFO: Grant Application must include a high-level overview of the supplemental training, partnerships, and RAPs for pre-apprenticeship training.
 - Attachment 5: STAFFING PLAN: Applicants will utilize this attachment to outline staff from lead applicant and partner organizations names, roles, percent time on project, grant related duties, etc.
 - Attachment 6: GOAL & ACTIVITY TIMELINE: Grant applications must include a work plan which will outline the total proposed number of individuals recruited, enrolled, completed, and transitioned from the applicant's program as well as these metrics per cohort. Applicants will also outline the timeline for recruitment, enrollment, instruction, and transition.
- **RESUMES OF PROGRAM STAFF:** Grant applications should include the resumes of key program staff (or, if staff need to be hired through this grant, a description of the job responsibilities and requisite job qualifications) that demonstrate capacity to complete the work outlined in the application. Note that resumes of program staff should be uploaded to the web form as one additional PDF or Word document
- **MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING AND/OR PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS:** Grant applications should provide MOUs and/or Partnership Agreements with key partners detailing the entity's information, key staff information, roles and responsibilities associated with this project, and dollar amounts for specific services to be rendered. Note that the MOUs and/or partnership agreements should be uploaded to the web form as an additional PDF or Word document

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 must be submitted by **11:59PM CST on Monday, May 5th, 2025.**

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/76691d032bb2491da5e6151c736d4969>

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.

This funding opportunity is not subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

6. Funding Restrictions.

This opportunity may 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. The Department will consider the following criteria when evaluating the application submittal: Capacity, Quality, Need and Cost Efficiency. This section will then be broken down into the evaluating criteria and description on what will be evaluated will be included for each criteria section.

Applicant Capacity (30%)

- The applicant's mission and operations are connected to the objectives of the NOFO.
- The applicant's experience and capacity to meet the administrative requirements of the grant including the financial management, program management, and reporting of the grant activities.
- Applicant's staff and/or contractors' qualifications, experience, and capacity to administer the activities outlined in the application.
- Applicant team's experience in administering the craft apprenticeship programs as outlined in the NOFO.
- The applicant's capacity and experience in working with, recruiting, serving, and supporting participants from the NOFO's target participants.
- The applicants experience with the electric industry including the experience in administering programs that expand apprentices in the electric industry.

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- The applicant's experience and knowledge in administering similar grants and projects and providing workforce training programs.

Documentation of Need and Opportunity (20%)

- How the program will result in creating apprenticeships in areas where apprenticeship, pre-apprenticeship and career pathway opportunities are not widely available.
- The applicant's equity-focused strategies will be implemented in all aspects of the program including the program design, selection of program partners, participant recruitment, design of training strategies. This also includes the provision participant case management, supportive services, training, placement, and retention services.
- The applicant's connection and experience serving the targeted program participants outlined in the NOFO.
- The applicant's marketing and recruitment strategies for program participants and how this is aligned with the requirements of the NOFO.
- The applicant's strategies to engage with electric industry partners and employers and how this is aligned with the requirements of the NOFO.
- The applicant's additional contextual information that demonstrates how grant will meet the needs of the electric industry and targeted program participants.

Quality of Project Plan (40%)

- The quality and quantity of the registered apprenticeship program(s) that will be supported with this grant and describe how this is consistent with the apprenticeship standards for the particular crafts, trades, or skills in the electric industry.
- The quality and quantity of the pre-apprenticeship program(s) that will be supported with this grant and describe how this is consistent with the standards for the particular crafts, trades, or skills in the electric industry.
- The quality and quantity of the career pathways programs and strategies that will be supported with this grant and describe how this is consistent with the standards for the particular crafts, trades, or skills in the electric industry.
- The applicant's approach to working with employers or industry associations in providing work-based learning opportunities to pre-apprentices and/or developing RAPs.
- The applicant's case management and career planning services will be provided including the coordination of assessment, individuals career plans, and follow up services will be provided to apprentices, pre-apprentices and other program participants.
- The applicant's plan to provide supportive services and other participant retention strategies that will be provided for both registered apprenticeships and/or pre-apprenticeships.
- The applicant's project activities with local or regional workforce, education including local Apprenticeship Specialists. Describe how you will coordinate to conduct business outreach, promote the craft apprenticeships to the business community, etc.

Budget Narrative/Cost Effectiveness/Return on Investment (10%)

- The efficiency, effectiveness of the proposed costs in relation to the proposed outcome.
- The applicant demonstrates that the costs are reasonable and necessary to meet the objectives of the project.
- The applicant demonstrates the cost effectiveness of the subcontractors and/or partners that will be funded under this grant.
- The applicant demonstrates how they will leverage programs, services and partnerships to improve the program's cost-effectiveness, return on investment, and long-term sustainability. This includes the amount of matching funds that will support 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. The Grant will be awarded to the applicant with the highest score. The applicant selected will enter into negotiations with the Department. The purpose of negotiations will be to arrive at acceptable grant terms, including budgetary and scope of work provisions, at which time the final decision to make a grant award will be made.

The Merit Based Review process is subject to appeal. 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/meritappealreview.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).

Additional Program Reporting and Success Stories

The grantee will be required to submit written testimonials for program participant successes published on Illinois workNet to show how programs are making a difference in people's lives. It is above and beyond a list of events or activities, and describes a positive significant and noteworthy change to the participant. The Department will provide the grantee with additional instructions regarding the submission of success stories. The grantee may also be required to submit annual reports to document the program activities and the impact of the program. progress of the project as part of the grant requirements.

Program Participant Reporting

The grantee will be required to report "participant level" information for every individual served under this grant. The Department will require detailed reports using the Illinois workNet Portal. Note that the Department's grant manager will work with grantee to determine the proper classification and reporting of the services that are provided under this grant based on the applicable program regulations.

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

Resources: Below are items that applicants should familiarize themselves with to understand the application's requirements:

- State of Illinois Unified Workforce Plan: <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/wioastateplan>

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- Grant Accountability and Transparency Act:
<https://www.illinois.gov/sites/gata/Pages/default.aspx>
- U.S. Department of Labor, Office of Employment and Training, Office of Apprenticeship:
<https://www.dol.gov/apprenticeship>
- Apprenticeship Illinois: <https://www.apprenticeshipil.com>

Additional Assessments: Applicants may 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. 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: Once a grant is established, participation in technical assistance sessions may be required and will be provided throughout the grant period (in the form of webinars, meetings, and direct support). The successful applicant must agree to receive consultation technical assistance from authorized representatives of the Department. The applicant and collaborating partners may have required site visits, training, and in-person interviews.

NOFO Website: The Department has posted the NOFO forms and instructions at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/FEJACraftApprenticeshipProgramNOFO>

NOFO Information Session: The Department will coordinate a webinar to review the requirements of this NOFO and answer questions that will be also posted in the FAQ section of this web page. Attendance is not required but is encouraged.

April 4th, 2025, 1:00PM CST

https://illinoisstate.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_oXP3GTpDQiOXJ_1MuhCG0g