

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

Awarding Agency Name	Commerce And Econ Opp
Agency Contact	Aaron McEvoy (ceo.ceja@illinois.gov)
Announcement Type	Initial
Type of Assistance Instrument	Grant
Funding Opportunity Number	FY25-2
Funding Opportunity Title	Equitable Energy Future Grant Program
CSFA Number	420-35-3054
CSFA Popular Name	Equitable Energy Future
Anticipated Number of Awards	40
Estimated Total Program Funding	\$25,500,000
Award Range	\$250000 - \$1000000
Source of Funding	State
Cost Sharing or Matching Requirements	No
Indirect Costs Allowed	No
Restrictions on Indirect Costs	No
Posted Date	05/23/2025
Application Date Range	05/27/2025 - 12/31/2025 : 5:00PM
Grant Application Link	Please select the entire address below and paste it into the browser... https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3054-2991.html
Technical Assistance Session	Offered : Yes Mandatory : No Date : 06/24/2025 : 10:00AM Registration link : https://niu-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/oxof9u-XQN6ngRzO3HWT5g#/registration

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

Equitable Energy Future Grant Program NOFO ID: 3054-2991

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

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 provide pre-development funding opportunities to eligible contractors to support the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects benefitting businesses, community organizations, and the workforce in Illinois with a specific focus on historically disadvantaged communities. The grant program is designed to help remove barriers to project, community, and business development caused by lack of capital.

Program Description

The Equitable Energy Future Grant Program, established by Public Act 102-0662 (Section 5-60, subsection (d)), is intended to provide grants of up to \$1 million promoting renewable energy¹ and energy efficiency² projects that seek to achieve many of the following:

- Provide benefits to low-income communities wherein at least 50% of projected energy produced or saved benefits low-income households³ or not-for-profit organizations providing services to low-income households, affordable housing owners, or community-based businesses providing services to low-income households;
- Invest in equity investment eligible communities (defined below)
- Provide on-the-job training;
- Support contractors who are participating in or have demonstrated an intent to participate in the Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program and the Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program (when operational);
- Employ a minimum of 51% of its workforce from graduates or current or former participants of the following Clean and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) and Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA)⁴ workforce programs: the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (when operational), the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (when operational), the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program (when operational). For CEJA program statuses and updates visit <https://dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/ceja-program-announcements.html>.
- Provide avenues of employment for the workforce training efforts for programs created by FEJA, including the Solar Training Pipeline Program and the Multi-cultural Jobs Program.

"Equity investment eligible communities" are defined as geographic areas throughout Illinois which would most benefit from equitable investments by the State designed to combat discrimination. Specifically, the eligible communities are defined as the following areas:

- **Restore. Reinvest. Renew (R3)** areas as established pursuant to Section 10-40 of the Cannabis Regulation and Tax Act. R3 areas are defined as Illinois communities that have been harmed by violence, excessive incarceration, and economic disinvestment and have been excluded from economic opportunities, including opportunities in the energy sector; and

¹ According to the Illinois Power Agency Act, "Renewable energy resources" includes energy and its associated renewable energy credit or renewable energy credits from wind, solar thermal energy, photovoltaic cells and panels, biodiesel, anaerobic digestion, crops and untreated and unadulterated organic waste biomass, and hydropower that does not involve new construction or significant expansion of hydropower dams, waste heat to power systems, or qualified combined heat and power systems.

² According to the Illinois Power Agency Act, "Energy efficiency" means measures that reduce the amount of electricity or natural gas consumed in order to achieve a given end use. "Energy efficiency" includes voltage optimization measures that optimize the voltage at points on the electric distribution voltage system and thereby reduce electricity consumption by electric customers' end use devices. "Energy efficiency" also includes measures that reduce the total Btus of electricity, natural gas, and other fuels needed to meet the end use or uses.

³ According to the Energy Community Reinvestment Act (20 ILCS 735/10-10), low-income households are defined as "persons and families whose income does not exceed 80% of area median income, adjusted for family size and revised every 2 years."

⁴ 220 ILCS 5/16-108.12

- **Environmental Justice** communities, as defined by the Illinois Power Agency pursuant to the Illinois Power Agency Act, where residents have historically been subject to disproportionate burdens of pollution, including pollution from the energy sector.

For more information and a map of equity investment eligible communities (EIEC), visit Equity Eligible Illinois: <https://energyequity.illinois.gov/resources/equity-investment-eligible-community-map.html>

This program is available to all communities in Illinois, but funding prioritization will be given to projects located within EIEC or located outside of an EIEC, but directly supporting the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in EIECs.

Grant funds may be used to support a wide array of pre-development activities to support the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects, including:

- Planning and project development, including costs for professional services such as architecture, design, engineering, auditing, consulting, and developer services
- Application (e.g. Funding, Credentials, Agency Applications, Utility Applications etc.), deposit, and approval
- Purchasing and leasing of land
- Permitting and zoning
- Interconnection application costs and fees, studies, and expenses
- Equipment and supplies (for pre-development uses)
- Community outreach, marketing, and engagement
- Staff and operations expenses (for pre-development uses)

This Department identifies four phases of project development: (1) Planning and Feasibility (2) Pre-Development (3) Construction (4) Implementation. Only activities and costs associated with Phase 1: Planning and Feasibility and Phase 2: Pre-Development are funded under this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Applications are accepted for Phase 1 only, Phase 2 only, or Phase 1 and 2. Lists of allowable activities for Phase 1 and Phase 2 can be found in the Program Application and on the EEF Supplemental Guidance document found on the DCEO NOFO webpage.

Applicants should provide funding estimates, expected activities, and estimated outcomes for each phase for which that the applicant is requesting funding. Anticipated outcomes (e.g. financial, energy savings/generation, community impact etc.) for the overall project must also be provided. If funds are awarded, for both Phase 1 and Phase 2, the Department will review Phase 1 performance metrics at the end of Phase 1 to determine whether the grantee may receive funding for Phase 2 activities. Budget and scope of work modifications may be made at that time. For applicants requesting funds for Phase 2 only, applicants should submit results/outcomes or estimated outcomes for Phase 1. Refer to Section D for specific requirements for Phase 2 only applications.

Program History

The Equitable Energy Future Grant Program is part of a larger strategy to equitably grow clean energy contractors and workforce in Illinois, as specified by the CEJA (Public Act 102-0662). CEJA establishes various new programs and expands existing programs aimed at accelerating the adoption of clean energy sources, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency efforts. The manufacturing, construction, and maintenance activities required to meet these regulations, incentives, and goals will require significant expansion of businesses and well-trained workers. Historically, these workforce investments have not benefited businesses and contractors in underserved communities in Illinois. The Equitable Energy Future Grant Program is one of several programs created by CEJA to rectify these historical inequities by expanding business opportunities for equity eligible contractors. The Equitable Energy Future Program is one of two components of the Jobs and Environmental Justice Grant Program established in Section 5-60 of Public Act 102-0662.

Performance Goals and Measures

Successful applicants will be required to report and document milestones achieved and other relevant outputs and outcomes of the grant. For projects that do advance to the construction and implementation phases, reporting is required during and post project construction and based on project goals and program metrics.

These metrics may include:

- Planning/development activities completed
- Renewable project(s) successfully completed
- Energy efficiency projects successfully completed
- Installed capacity of completed renewable energy projects
- Projected output of completed renewable energy projects
- Projected annual energy savings of completed energy efficiency projects
- Permanent full-time equivalent jobs created
- Number of trainees entering employment recruited from CEJA or FEJA Workforce Programs
- Expenditures spent with an Equity Eligible Contractor
- Number of low-wage/low-skill trainees receiving a wage/benefit increase
- Investment leveraged

There is a risk that planning and development activities may lead to the conclusion that the project is not feasible and therefore that the project should not advance to Phase 2 or the construction phase, or that the project plan should be significantly altered. Grantees will be required to provide a project narrative detailing how the planning/development activities led to these decisions and how outcomes could be improved in the future.

Other Information

All applicants must demonstrate proof of a historical, current, or future, partnership(s) with the community in which the project will be located (especially those within environmental justice (EJ) and/or Restore. Reinvest. Renew. (R3) communities and/or serving EJ and/or R3 communities) and must demonstrate how the project will benefit that community. Successful applications will provide specific names of community organizations or stakeholders, information about the partnership, and the role (if any) that the partner will play in the proposed project. Letters of support are required. Document this list of collaborators in the required Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access Plan which is located on this program's DCEO NOFO site.

Residential Renovations and New Builds: To align with the objectives of this program in supporting EJ/R3 communities and their residents—particularly low- to moderate-income households—applicants proposing residential projects must clearly outline the net benefits to residents or community members. Additionally, applicants must demonstrate how the project will prevent exclusion or harm to existing residents due to its direct or indirect benefits. This may be achieved through various mechanisms, such as Affordable Housing Covenants, Deed Restrictions, Community Benefit Agreements, and First Right of Refusal, among others.

B. Funding Information

This grant program is utilizing state funds appropriated by the Illinois General Assembly under Public Act 102-0662 (<https://www.ilga.gov/legislation/publicacts/102/102-0662.html>). Total available funding in the Jobs and Environmental Grant Programs is \$34 million, with \$25.5 million expected to be awarded through this NOFO. The remaining funds are allocated to the Community Solar Sovereignty Grant, which is obligated to receive 25% of the overall funding, though any unused funds from the Community Solar Sovereignty Grant may be made available for this program. Awards will range from \$250,000 to \$1,000,000. The Department expects to make up to 40 awards through this NOFO.

Anticipated start date for awards is dependent on application submission and review. The period of performance is expected to be the date of grant agreement execution through up to four years from the date of grant agreement execution.

Non-construction pre-development costs are allowable under this grant opportunity. Any cost related to construction or implementation activities are not allowable. For more information regarding allowable and

non-allowable costs, refer to the Equitable Energy Futures Grant Program Allowable and Non-Allowable Costs document available on this grant's DCEO NOFO page.

Pre-award costs are allowable for this grant opportunity. However, depending on the applicant's fiscal year and identified risks through the GATA required Internal Controls Questionnaire (ICQ), pre-award costs may trigger an audit requirement. This will be addressed during grant negotiations for applications that are selected to move forward in the grant process.

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:

- a) Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) that can provide an Illinois Power Agency EEC certification (<https://illinoisshines.com/become-an-equity-eligible-contractor-eec-approved-vendor-or-designee/>). An EEC per the definition in the Illinois Power Agency Act, is defined as:
 - i) A business that is majority-owned by equity eligible persons (see definition below)
 - ii) A nonprofit or cooperative that is majority governed by equity eligible persons
 - iii) A natural person that is an equity eligible person offering personal services as an independent contractor.

Applicants applying under this eligibility requirement must submit their **Illinois Power Agency Certification**. If an applicant needs to submit an application to become an EEC the application form can be found here:

<https://forms.office.com/pages/responsepage.aspx?id=WhykgeRTDE2nqHQvI9dkUQd9loqD76JllsHvRlgK925UQVVEV0NJMEROQVJCMUFIOURCQzVVMk8yTy4u>

- b) An Illinois business or nonprofit or cooperative organization that meets the equity building criteria in paragraph (9.5) of subsection (g) of Section 8-103B of the Public Utilities Act.

To determine if an applicant meets the equity building criteria outlined in the cited section of the Public Utilities Act, the Department will evaluate the required CEJA Ecosystem Utilization Plan (CEUP) which is required with submission of this NOFO's application package. The CEJA Ecosystem Utilization Plan (CEUP) plan is available on the DCEO NOFO site for the opportunity along with additional required application materials.

Equity eligible persons, per the definition in the Illinois Power Agency Act, are:

- Persons who graduate from or are current or former participants in the CEJA or FEJA workforce programs;⁵
- Persons who are graduates of or are currently enrolled in the foster care system;
- Persons who were formerly incarcerated; or
- Persons whose primary residence is in an equity eligible investment community (see the definition in Section A above).

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.

Cost sharing or matching is not required for this program. However, applicants for this opportunity are strongly encouraged to leverage other incentive programs or funding sources to improve the cost effectiveness of grant funds. Examples may include the Equitable Energy Upgrade Program, the Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund, Illinois Solar for All or the Adjustable Block Program funding, utility energy efficiency program incentives, and more. See the Program Application for other examples. Successful applicants will demonstrate their knowledge of alternate grant and/or incentive programs by providing names of grant programs and/or incentives they have or intend to apply for along with high-level details of those existing/planned applications (i.e. estimated funding request, amount of incentive(s), role that funding would play in the overall project).

3. Indirect Cost Rate.

The grant will not compensate for indirect costs, overhead or administrative expenses associated with the execution of the program.

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

⁵ The CEJA and FEJA workforce programs include: the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program, the Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program, the Illinois Climate Works Preapprenticeship Program, the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program, the Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program, the Solar Training Pipeline Program, and the Multi-cultural Jobs Program.

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 multiple applications for this opportunity. A single project cannot receive more than \$1 million of Jobs and Environmental Justice Program Funding (Equity Energy Futures or Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Programs). The maximum annual award per eligible lead applicant is \$3 million across all projects and all Jobs and Environmental Justice Program funding.

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:

Aaron McEvoy
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity
1011 S. 2nd Street
Springfield, IL 62704
Email: ceo.ceja@illinois.gov

2. Content and Form of Application Submission.

A standard application package must be submitted and reviewed by the Department. Each package should 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 a program application that can be found on the website where you accessed the application document:**

- ☐ Program Specific Application
The Program Specific application is a standardized four-page document which requires applicant demographic information, project location, description, activities, timeline, partners/collaborating organizations, vendors, /outcomes, staffing and workforce development.
- ☐ Documentation of IRS declaration: EIN letter, 501c3, c6, etc.
- ☐ CEJA Ecosystem Utilization Plan (CEUP)
- ☐ Equitable Energy Future Project Timeline
- ☐ Letter(s) of support from community leaders and stakeholders
Documenting their support for the project and the community needs it will address and (and if applicable from partner CEJA or FEJA workforce program grantee or other workforce program about how the project will help grow the clean energy workforce

- ☐ Illinois Power Agency (IPA) Certification (for EECs) or provide Attestation Form (Certification of Qualification for Equity Eligible Contractor Status)
- ☐ Property ownership document OR document demonstrating applicant's authority to make site improvements (if applicable).
- ☐ Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with collaborating organizations, or contracts for pre-development activities with professional service providers, vendors, etc. (if applicable to project)

For Phase 2 only projects:

- ☐ Design or construction documents that provide details of the project, if available (examples: building preliminary schematic, energy audit report, site map).
- ☐ Quotes used for budget estimates, if available (examples: preconstruction/construction budget, operating budget, contractor proposals/estimates)
- ☐ Documentation showing Phase 1 feasibility activities are complete.

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 State awarding agency may 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 State awarding agency is ready to make a Federal pass-through or State award, the State awarding agency 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.

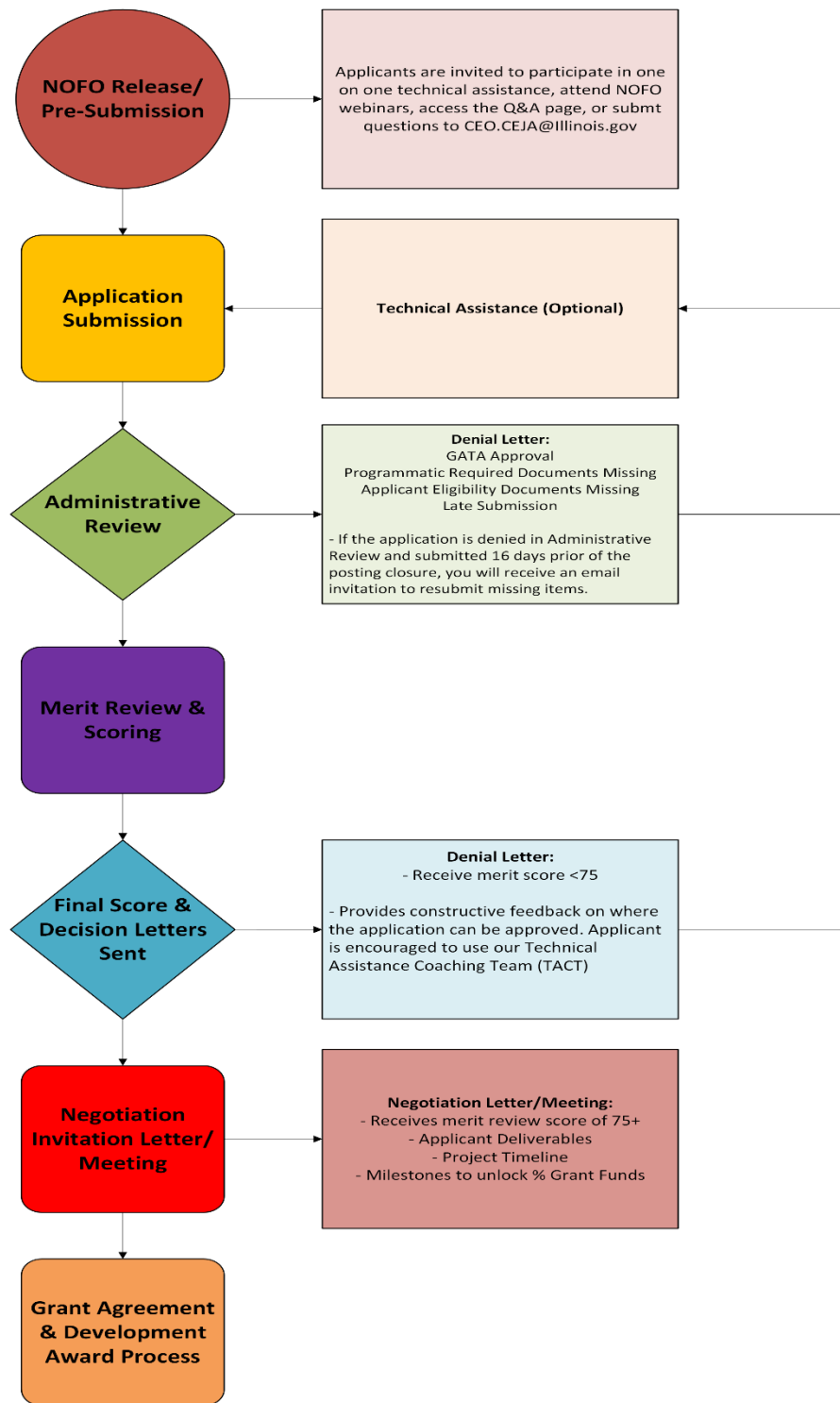
Applications for this opportunity must be submitted by 5:00PM CST on Wednesday, December 31, 2025.

Application materials must be submitted to the Department via electronic form at <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/47bd34e72997429db8cac23989d282c3>

Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis until all available funding is exhausted. Applicants are encouraged to submit as soon as possible. Waiting until the NOFO closes may decrease competitive advantage as applications are reviewed and awarded monthly. Due to the rolling nature of this opportunity, if applications are denied during the Administrative Review or Merit Review stages of the process applicants may revise and resubmit their application. Refer to the NOFO process graphic below.

Applicants who submit their application more than 16 days prior to the due date listed in Section D.4. Submission Dates and Times will be reviewed by program staff to determine if all required documents have been submitted. Applicants that submit an incomplete application will be notified via email of the missing documentation and will have the opportunity to resubmit a completed application package prior to the NOFO closure date.

Applications received 16 days or less prior to the submission due date will NOT be reviewed in advance. All applications received less than 16 days prior to the due date listed in Section D.4 will be reviewed upon closure of the NOFO as part of the standard Merit Review Process outlined in Section E. Application Review Information. Applications received less than 16 days prior to the submission due date will not have the opportunity to resubmit a revised application.



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. Proposals that fail to provide an Equity Eligible Contractor certificate or demonstrate that they meet equity building criteria as required in project application will not be considered (see Section C.1.). Each proposal will be scored on a percentage scale.

The Department shall consider the following criteria when evaluating the application submittal:

- Documentation of Need (10%)
- Applicant Qualifications and Capacity (20%)
- Project Quality (50%)
- Cost Effectiveness/Return on Investment (20%).

Documentation of Need (10%)	
The project's location within or serving equity investment eligible communities or populations and suitability for proposed use.	5%
The project's identification of community needs that the project will address.	5%
Applicant Qualifications and Capacity (20%)	
Applicant's capacity to execute the project and the qualifications of those assigned to the project and/or plan to hire or contract with other partners to execute the project.	5%
Applicant's historical or future long-term partnership with the community in which the project will be located.	5%
Applicant's or partner's expertise in successfully completing similar projects.	5%
Extent to which applicant and partners/contractors exceed minimum equity eligibility qualifications (such as equity eligible contractor requirements).	5%
Project Quality 50%	
Quality of plan to save or generate energy through renewable energy projects or energy efficiency improvements and the anticipated outcomes in terms of energy saved, energy generated, reduction in utility energy costs, and non-energy benefits.	15%
Quality of plan to execute project through activities related to project feasibility, project conception, project planning, project development, and implementation.	10%
Quality of plan for how the energy and cost savings will benefit equity investment eligible communities, low-income households, not-for-profit	10%

organizations serving equity investment eligible communities, etc.	
Quality of plan to support clean energy workforce and contractor development by hiring equity eligible contractors, including CEJA or FEJA workforce program graduates and/or contractor participants to work on the project and/or offer on-the-job training opportunities to CEJA or FEJA participants.	15%
Cost Effectiveness/Return on Investment (20%)	
The cost efficiency and effectiveness of the planned activities and projected outcomes.	5%
Ability to leverage existing funding sources, incentives, services and partnerships to improve the cost effectiveness and return on investment of the project.	10%
The Budget Narratives outline the amount of each line item and are costs reasonable.	5%

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 according to the following process:

- Applications that meet the NOFO eligibility requirements and receive scores of 75% or above will receive funding.
- Grants funds are available until are program funds are awarded.
- The final grants will be negotiated by the Department based on the applications' alignment with the requirements of this NOFO. 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 scoring rubric used by the evaluation committee is provided above and on the DCEO NOFO website for this opportunity.

Applications that meet the minimum scoring threshold of 75% will be considered for funding. While the NOFO remains open, the Department will make funding recommendations on a rolling basis as applications are reviewed and achieve a merit review score of 75% or higher.

Once the NOFO has closed, funding recommendations will be made in chronological order based on when they were received . In instances where funds remain available after awarding all applications that scored 75% or higher, the Department may consider applications with the next highest scores for funding, subject to the availability of funds and in alignment with program priorities.

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).

Business Enterprise Program: For grant awards of \$250,000 or more, grantees will be required to comply with the Business Enterprise Program for Minorities, Females, and Persons with Disabilities Act (30 ILCS 575/0.01 *et seq.*), which establishes a goal for contracting with businesses that have been certified as owned and controlled by persons who are minority, female or who have disabilities. The Department will work with the grantees to ensure compliance prior to the establishment of the grant agreement as well as through the life of the grant.

Environmental Review Requirements: Capital grants will be reviewed to determine environmental review requirements. Based on the scope of the project, the grantees may be required to complete additional environmental approvals before a grant agreement can be initiated.

Illinois Works Jobs Program Act (30 ILCS 559/20-1 *et seq.*): For grants with an estimated total project cost of \$500,000 or more, the grantee will be required to comply with the Illinois Works Apprenticeship Initiative (30 ILCS 559/20-20 to 20-25) and all applicable administrative rules. The “estimated total project cost” is a good faith approximation of the costs of an entire project being paid for in whole or in part by appropriated capital funds to construct a public work. The goal of the Illinois Apprenticeship Initiative is that apprentices will perform either 10% of the total labor hours actually worked in each prevailing wage classification or 10% of the estimated labor hours in each prevailing wage classification, whichever is less. Grantees will be permitted to seek from the Department a waiver or reduction of this goal in certain circumstances pursuant to 30 ILCS

559/20-20(b). The grantee must ensure compliance for the life of the entire project, including during the term of the grant and after the term ends, if applicable, and will be required to report on and certify its compliance.

Prevailing Wage Act (820 ILCS 130/0.01 et seq.): Applicants that are awarded grants shall comply with all requirements of the Prevailing Wage Act, including but not limited to, inserting into all contracts for construction a stipulation to the effect that not less than the prevailing rate of wages as applicable to the project shall be paid to all laborers, workers, and mechanics performing work under the award and requiring all bonds of contractors to include a provision as will guarantee the faithful performance of such prevailing wage clause as provided by contract. Grantees will be required to report on Prevailing Wage Act compliance on a monthly basis.

Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act (30 ILCS 570/0.01 et seq.): All grantees will be required to comply with the Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act (30 ILCS 570/0.01 et seq.) (the "Act"), which provides that whenever there is a period of excessive unemployment in Illinois (as defined by the Act), if the Grantee is using Grant Funds for (1) constructing or building any public works, or (2) performing the clean-up and on-site disposal of hazardous waste for the State of Illinois or any political subdivision of the State, then the Grantee shall employ at least 90% Illinois laborers on such project. Illinois laborers refers to any person who has resided in Illinois for at least 30 days and intends to become or remain an Illinois resident. Grantees may receive an exception from this requirement by submitting a request and supporting documents certifying that Illinois laborers are either not available, or are incapable of performing the particular type of work involved. The certification must: (a) be submitted to the grant manager within the first quarter of the Award Term; (b) provide sufficient support that demonstrates the exception is met; (c) be signed by an authorized signatory of the Grantee; and (d) be approved by DCEO in consultation with the Illinois Department of Labor. In addition, every contractor on a public works project or improvement or hazardous waste clean-up and on-site disposal project in this State may place on such work no more than 3 (or 6 in the case of a hazardous waste clean-up and on-site disposal project) of the contractor's regularly employed non-resident executive and technical experts.

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).

Project Milestone Reporting

Grantees will be required to submit project deliverables at project milestones. Milestones and the corresponding timeline will be established based on the applicant's Project Timeline submitted during the application stage and solidified during grant negotiations. Milestones and timelines will be customized for each grantee. Along with deliverable information, grantees will also be required to submit an updated CEJA Ecosystem Utilization Plan (CEUP) at each milestone.

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

The Department reserves the right to request additional information from applicants to evaluate applications. Submission of an application confers no right to an award or to a subsequent grant agreement. The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity 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's beginning date.

Renewals and Grant Modifications: For applicants that are awarded Phase 1 and Phase 2 grants, the Department may authorize the renewal of grant funding for Phase 2 activities after Phase 1 activities have been completed, based on the activities, outcomes and performance of the grantee, as documented in the Periodic Performance Reports and other performance reporting as required by the Department. The renewal, if granted, would occur after an evaluation of activities and outcomes by the Department. Budget and scope of work modifications may be made at that time, based on results of Phase 1 activities.

Grantee Technical Assistance and Professional Development: Grantees must plan to attend orientation training sessions upon signing their grant agreement with the Department. Grantees will be required to participate in one-on-one technical assistance meetings with their assigned grant managers at least once per month. Depending on the needs and capacity, the Department may require grantees to participate in one-on-one technical assistance with assigned grant managers more often than one time per month.

NOFO Technical Assistance: The Department will provide Technical Assistance (TA) throughout the application process, in the form of webinars, office hours, on-line resources and an FAQ.

- Technical Assistance webinar
- Office Hours: Request a 30-minute virtual technical assistance session by emailing: ceo.ceja@illinois.gov or submit a TA Request Form.
- If you desire support to complete this application, contact a Clean Energy Contractor Incubator (when in operation), a Small Business Development Center (<https://dceo.illinois.gov/smallbizassistance/beginhere/sbdc.html>), an APEX Accelerator (<https://dceo.illinois.gov/smallbizassistance/beginhere/ptac.html>), or the Illinois Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (<https://dceo.illinois.gov/omee.html>).

Questions and Answers: Applicants may submit questions to ceo.ceja@illinois.gov. Responses will be posted on the Questions and Answers page found on the DCEO NOFO webpage.