



Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program 2024-25 Program Manual

Chapter 8: Program Completion, Transition Services, and Follow-up



Chapter Overview

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

- Reference program completion definitions.
- Complete the required Pre-Transition Career Assessment.
- Describe transition staff responsibilities.
- Articulate expected outcomes and deliverables.
- Provide transition and follow-up services.
- Identify active follow-up versus long-term follow-up.
- Integrate the following six core values; diversity, welcoming and inclusion, accessibility, belonging, and equity, into all elements of your program's transition services and follow-up activities.

Program Completion

Program Completion refers to the conclusion of instructional training. For most participants, program completion will mark the end of their instructional training and the beginning of their transition to a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) and/or employment. **Successful Completion** occurs when the participant accomplishes the following:

- Met the testing and attendance requirements to receive their NCCER/TradesFutures MC3 construction certification.
- Met requirements to receive OSHA 10 and First Aid/CPR certifications.
- Completed all essential employability and clean energy basics modules, received a satisfactory grade on post-assessments (70% or higher), and attended at least 80% of the sessions.

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- Completed all worksite/work-based learning training requirements.

Students who complete these different program elements become “program graduates.” Completions will be reported in the CEJA Reporting System. While not required, some grantees may opt to host celebratory ceremonies (e.g. a graduation ceremony) or offer additional certificates of completion.

Program Exit

A participant exits the program when they no longer receive any services from the program. While Program Completion refers to the conclusion of training services, **Program Exit** refers to the cessation of all services, including transition and barrier reduction services. A participant who exits the program may return to the same or another CEJA program but would need to reapply and re-enroll.

In Progress

Some participants may participate in the program but are unable to graduate because they have not met all program requirements (e.g. failed certification exams, did not attend the required number of training sessions, etc.).

In this instance, they are marked as “**In Progress**” in the CEJA Reporting System. Barrier reduction staff **must** establish an action plan to put them on the path to successful completion within a year of their enrollment in the program. For some, this will simply require them to retake an exam, while others might need to complete specific modules, particularly if they were absent from the program for long periods of time. If participants need to wait for a new cohort to retake modules, grantees must continue engagement with the participants to ensure they can return and successfully complete the program. Participants must complete these requirements within one calendar year from the start of their training. A participant who does not complete the requirements within one year must reapply and re-enroll.

Withdrawal

Participants may withdraw from the program due to unforeseen circumstances that make successful completion difficult or impossible. Reasons for withdrawal may include, but not be limited to:

- Moving out of state
- Lack of interest in the clean energy industry
- Life change requiring full-time employment
- Illness

Before a participant’s withdrawal is finalized, the barrier reduction staff must meet with the participant to determine if there are any barrier reduction services that can be offered to keep the participant from withdrawing. In some circumstances, additional supports may help the participant change their decision to withdraw.

Once the withdrawal decision is finalized, grantees must conduct an exit interview with the participant. This is an opportunity to seek participant feedback on the program. The barrier reduction staff will either meet with the participant, if possible or call the participant to complete the **Exit Interview Questionnaire**, which is then uploaded to the participant’s profile in the CEJA Reporting System.

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Grantees must also ask if follow-up contact would be welcomed. In some cases, individuals may seek to re-enroll at a future date.

Note: A hard copy of the Exit Interview Questionnaire is available in the Climate Works Partner Guide.

In some cases, a participant may withdraw and not tell anyone. Barrier reduction staff must attempt to contact the participant via phone, email, or other communication methods to confirm the participant's withdrawal, establish a reason for the withdrawal, inquire about the possibility of meeting to discuss additional service needs that may help the participant remain in the program, and conduct the exit interview. After three consecutive weeks of attempting to make contact, the grantee may finalize the withdrawal decision in the CEJA Reporting System.

Dismissals are also classified as withdrawals. This occurs when participants fail to comply with the terms of their commitment agreement or violate program policies. Grantees **must** maintain a dismissal policy that outlines a standard procedure for how, when, and why participants can be dismissed. Once dismissal has been confirmed, all services from Climate Works must be terminated through the CEJA Reporting System. A formal dismissal letter must be provided to the participant, and a copy must be saved in the participant's profile in the CEJA Reporting System outlining the reasons for dismissal and the process that was followed by the program.

Participant Feedback Survey

All participants who have completed the program will be asked to provide feedback on their program experience through a **Participant Feedback Survey**. Asking participants to complete the survey is a mandatory step.

This survey can be accessed by participants via a computer or mobile device through a link provided by Climate Works program administrators. All responses to this survey are anonymous, and individual data will not be made available to grantees. However, grantees will be provided with aggregate information from their participants as a tool to improve programming.

Transition/Career Services

Transition/Career services involve activities that expose participants to the construction industry and help them apply to DOL Registered Apprenticeship Programs (RAPs) and employment. This can be achieved by involving participants in relevant industry events (e.g. career fairs, trade-related networking events, etc.), assisting them with applications, preparing them for testing, and helping with other apprenticeship entry requirements. Transition services begin before the completion of the program and continue after participants have successfully completed the instructional component of the program. The transition staff will begin transition services by working with participants to develop a **Transition Plan**, based on information collected during the **Pre-transition Career Assessment**.

Note: For additional information about the Career Assessment, see Chapter 5: Program Application & Intake.

Transition staff are responsible for transition and follow-up services for graduates. Their work with participants will take place primarily at the end of the participant's time in the program. However, they must dedicate time at the start of their engagement in the program to build relationships with partners,

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RAPs, unions, and contractors to set up connections and resources for students once they are ready to transition.

With an emphasis on RAP entry, transition staff are not only job developers, but also relationship-builders and coaches. Responsibilities include, but may not be limited to:

- Developing and maintaining relationships with transition partners including DOL-registered apprenticeship programs, advanced construction programs, community colleges, and contractors/construction employers, among others.
- Scheduling face-to-face meetings with participants to identify primary and secondary goals through the Pre-transition Career Assessment.
- Assisting with or hosting partner involvement for all transition services for participants including resume writing, interview preparation, job fairs, and more.

Complete Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan

The **Pre-transition Career Assessment** and **plan** is completed three to four weeks prior to the end of training. Transition staff meet one-on-one with each participant to complete the Pre-transition Career Assessment. The assessment is intended to determine participants' skill levels, service needs, barriers to employment or apprenticeship placement, occupational goals, and career pathway. The Pre-transition Career Assessment and plan address the occupational knowledge, skills, and abilities associated with their career goals, and the services needed to reach their goal. The assessment and plan document the participant's career decisions (i.e. which apprenticeship programs they want to apply to) and lists the services that the grantee will provide to help the applicant reach their goals.

Information from the assessment and plan will be entered into the CEJA Reporting System so that grantees can track their goals, outcomes, and transition services. A copy of the assessment and plan is available in the Climate Works Partner Guide.

Select Transition/Career Services

Transition services may include providing career information, resume writing, interview preparation, assistance with completing an apprenticeship program application, job application assistance, referral for job search assistance, referral for assistance with opening a business, referral to a community college, or referral to an American Job Center, among others. Barrier Reduction funds may be used for any application fees. Some of these services can be provided concurrently while participants are completing their pre-apprentice program training.

The Career Plan will indicate which transition services are being provided to participants to assist them with their transition to a registered apprenticeship, job, or advanced training. The services are available in the drop-down menu in the CEJA Reporting System. Transition staff must regularly update the system to show which services have been provided.

Table 8.1: Transition/Career services

Transition/career service	Description
Vocational exploration (career awareness)	Learn about the variety of careers and occupations available, their skill requirements, working conditions, pre-requisites, and job opportunities. Explore careers that match participant interests, skills, and abilities.
Career planning (case-management)	One-on-one assistance and career counseling to assess the areas in which participants have the greatest needs and to assist them in determining whether their skills are in demand in the local economy.
Group workforce workshops and activities	Workshops or group activities to provide participants with knowledge of labor market information, application/resume preparation, interview techniques, or job search techniques.
Career fairs	Opportunities to meet with employers or apprenticeship programs, learn about careers, and apply for jobs.
Assistance with completing an apprenticeship program application	Assistance with completing a registered apprenticeship application in the construction/building trades.
Job search activities and assistance	One-on-one assistance in job search activities, including locating job openings, resume writing, and setting up interviews. This may include finding temporary/transitional employment while on the waiting list for an apprenticeship.
Post secondary prep and transition activities	Assistance with preparing to apply for postsecondary education or training in a related field. This may include exploring options such as community college and universities, preparing for testing, assistance with college admission applications, filling out financial aid applications, and applying for scholarships and grants.
Out of area job search/relocation assistance	Assistance for those who have skills that are in-demand in other labor markets, but not in their local labor market, to locate employment opportunities. This includes access to job listings, contacting employers, assistance preparing resumes, etc. This includes assistance with moving to their new job site.
Referral to other employment/placement assistance	If the participant is no longer interested in a clean energy/construction career, transition staff may refer them to an American Job Center where they can get assistance in applying to other jobs and training programs.
Unemployment insurance filing information	Assistance filing claims for unemployment compensation.
Referral for assistance with opening a business	Referral to a Small Business Development Center, Contractor Incubator, or other service.
Alumni Networking	Provide opportunities for time-limited interactions geared toward one-on-one meetings with alumni.

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*Note: There is **Alumni Networking (Support Service)** and **Alumni Networking (Transition Service)**. **Alumni Networking (Support Service)** is addressed in Chapter 6: Barrier Reduction Services.*

Some apprenticeship programs have long wait lists. If graduates are unable to get into an apprenticeship program right away, transition staff must work with them to find temporary employment or on-the-job training with a contractor while they are waiting.

Alternatively, some participants may be interested in finding employment rather than entering an apprenticeship program. Transition staff must help connect participants to clean energy contractors in their network to facilitate job placements and other on-the-job training opportunities. Transition staff are expected to help the team meet the outcome metrics outlined in the grantee agreement.

Continue to Offer Support Services

Grantees **must** continue to provide comprehensive barrier reduction services during the transition and follow-up period (the 12 months following program completion) to help facilitate effective transitions into RAPs and jobs.

Note: For more information about available services, see Chapter 6: Barrier Reduction Services.

The need for barrier reduction services does not end when the program is complete; during the application or job search period, applicants may still need wrap-around services to address transportation and childcare barriers. These needs may continue for the first few months after they have received a job, before program graduates are able to cover the costs themselves. As much as possible, programs should coordinate services within their local community.

Student support services (such as mentoring or tutoring) must also be made available during the transition and follow-up period, as needed.

Connecting to Employers through the Energy Workforce Equity Portal

Grantees are **required** to enter program graduates into the Illinois Power Agency's Energy Workforce Equity Portal upon completion. The **Illinois Power Agency's Energy Workforce Equity Portal** is an online source designed to help connect clean energy companies with equity investment eligible persons looking to work in the clean energy sector in Illinois. Making these connections is a key aspect of ensuring that the clean energy industry in Illinois grows in an equitable manner. Equity investment eligible persons can use this portal to post their availability to entities seeking to hire equity investment eligible persons. Developers of clean energy projects (such as Approved Vendors and Designees in the Adjustable Block Program, or developers of utility-scale wind and solar projects) can use this portal to post clean energy jobs and to search for equity investment eligible persons. Through this portal, graduates may be matched with contractors and apprenticeship programs based on geography and trade needs. A participant will not be verified as a Completion until they have been entered into this system. To add program graduates into this system, grantees will need the following information:

- Basic contact information including phone number and email address
- Employment status (employed, available, inactive)
- Trade interests

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- Skills and certifications received
- Graduation date
- Mode of transportation
- Distance they are willing to travel for work

Participant profiles must be updated on at least a quarterly basis for the first year after graduation. For more information about how to navigate this system, refer to the Climate Works Partner Guide.

CEJA Reporting System

Transition services must be tracked in the CEJA Reporting System. There are two outcome options:

Primary Outcomes - Participants who enroll in a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP):

- Participants who enroll in a RAP through employer sponsorship
- Participants who enroll in a RAP through open enrollment
- Participants expected to complete a RAP and graduate to journeyperson status

Secondary Outcomes - Participants who do not enroll in a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP):

- Participant(s) who complete the pre-apprenticeship program and are hired by a construction employer
- Participant(s) who complete the pre-apprenticeship program and seek non-construction employment
- Participant(s) who complete the pre-apprenticeship program and continue onto an advanced construction training program instead of a RAP Participant(s) who complete the pre-apprenticeship program and continue onto a non-construction training program or education
- Participant(s) who complete the pre-apprenticeship program and open a small business

Active Follow-Up

Transition staff are expected to conduct active follow-up with participants for the first-year post-transition, and once per year thereafter until the grant ends or the participant becomes a journeyperson. There are many ways to stay in touch with program graduates, including through surveys, focus groups, phone calls, text messages, social media, and email check-ins. The purpose of follow-up activities is to determine participants' additional needs, receive valuable feedback about program services, and verify progress and outcomes. The first-year post-transition is a period when apprentices may be most vulnerable to dropping out of their program.

Active follow-up is required at the following intervals, though more frequent follow-ups may be needed based on individual circumstances:

- One month after transition
- Two months after transition
- Three months after transition
- Six months after transition
- Nine months after transition

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- One year after transition
- Two years after transition
- Three years after transition

During each follow-up contact, grantees will ask graduates a series of questions to gather information about their employment status or their progress in their apprenticeship program.

Note: Sample follow-up questions are available in the CEJA Reporting System.

For those pursuing a RAP, transition staff will determine if the alum has:

- a) applied for an apprenticeship program,
- b) is on a waiting list, or
- c) has been enrolled in the program.

The transition staff will follow-up regarding the trade information, employment status, referral needs, barrier reduction services, mentorship, and/or other resources.

For those not pursuing a RAP, because they are no longer interested and/or do not plan to enter an apprenticeship program, the grantee must inquire if the alum was:

- a) dropped from the apprenticeship waiting list,
- b) accepted alternative employment in clean energy or some other field,
- c) completed or is pursuing training or other education programs and earned a certificate/degree.

These follow-ups are also opportunities to provide encouragement, answer questions, and assess the need for additional services. As with other kinds of assessments, connections, and follow-ups throughout the Climate Works program, transition and other grantee staff must uphold the six equity values and communicate clearly with care, empathy, and sensitivity to the diverse needs and situations of participants. Grantee staff **must** embrace differences and remember that individual characteristics and challenges do not define a person's entire identity.

Follow-up services and activities after apprenticeship and/or employment placement help facilitate further development and boost retention. Any follow-up services offered must be tracked in the CEJA Reporting System. The table below describes allowable follow-up services.

Table 8.2: Follow-up Services

Follow-up Service	Description
Individual Work Counseling	Individual counseling regarding the workplace or apprenticeship, including resolving work-related employment issues, helping to secure better paying jobs, additional career planning and counseling for individuals, and provision of information regarding additional education or employment opportunities.
Employer Contact and Intervention	May include contacting employers to verify employment to help secure better paying jobs or to resolve work-related issues.
Peer Support Group	Connecting individuals to peer support groups to provide opportunities for training, support, and resolving issues.
Mentorship	Mentorship with an adult (for youth participants) or an experienced worker to assist with workplace issues.
Career Advancement Services	Services that provide individuals with information about additional education or employment opportunities to advance in their careers and secure better paying jobs. Services may also include labor market and employment information regarding in-demand industry sectors or occupations available in the graduates' local geographic areas. This may include career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services, among others.
Barrier Reduction Support Services	Participants may continue to receive barrier reduction services (see above) for the first 12 months after completion. This includes referrals to community service providers.
Opening a Business Assistance Referral	Referral to a Small Business Development Center, Contractor Incubator, or other centers.

Long-term Follow-up

Beyond the first year of active tracking, Climate Works will employ a **longitudinal study** to track employment and outcomes every year for up to ten years after leaving the Climate Works program. This longitudinal study is essential in determining the effectiveness of Pre-apprenticeship Programs and the grantee's impact on individuals, communities, and the economy. Grantees are expected to assist with this longitudinal study during the duration of their grant.

Note: For more information regarding the longitudinal study, see Chapter 10: Data Management.

Additional Resources

See the Climate Works Partner Guide for:

- Exit Interview Questionnaire
- Participant Satisfaction Survey
- Pre-Transition Career Assessment
Sample Career Plan
- Sample follow-up questions
- Sample Dismissal Letter