



# Energy Transition Navigators Program

## 2024-25 Program Manual

## Chapter 3: Partnerships

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### Chapter Overview

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

- Ensure grantee team partners comply with program requirements (i.e., grantees/recipients, subgrantees/subrecipients, and contractors/vendors).
- Explore the partnerships you will need to develop with other CEJA program grantees.
- Identify equity training requirements for all partners.
- Develop strategic partnerships with stakeholders, including employers, to support CEJA workforce program success.
- Track partnerships in the CEJA Reporting System.
- Leverage recommended resources.

### Grantee Team Partners

Energy Transition Navigator grantee teams may consist of a single organization or multiple organizations working in partnership to deliver the program in a specific region. Your team may consist of several different categories of partners:

- **Main Grantee/Recipient:** A non-state entity receiving an award directly from DCEO to carry out the activities outlined in the award agreement.
- **Subgrantees/Subrecipients:** A non-state entity that receives a sub-award to carry out part or a portion of a state award. The sub-award creates an assistance relationship between the Grantee/Recipients and the Subgrantee/Subrecipient.
- **Contractors/Vendors:** A non-state entity that receives a contract to provide goods and/or services for the awarding non-state entity. The contract creates a procurement relationship between the contractor and the Grantee/Recipient and/or the Subgrantee/Subrecipient. This relationship may include an employer contracting with grantees for a work-based learning job site practicum.

*Note: A vendor may provide products or services but does not necessarily require a contract. However, it will create a procurement relationship. Refer to Chapter 8: Finances, Records, and Reports for procurement policy information.*

Each partner may have a different relationship with the grantee depending on the nature of the agreement, the services provided, and the payment/compensation structure. The terms of the partnership must be clearly delineated in a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**, which establishes the expectations for each party in the agreement.

*Note: For information about relationships that require MOUs see Table 1: Partnership and Provider Relationship Requirements below.*

Components of a **Memorandum of Understanding** may include, but not be limited to:

- Parties involved
- Name of project/program/grant
- Purpose of agreement
- Scope of work
- Responsibilities per party/entity
- Mutual understandings
- Communication/Reporting expectations
- Recordkeeping, maintenance, and retention
- Duration of agreement (start and end date)

Partners may fill a particular role and have specific grantee reporting requirements. Broadly speaking, partners relate to the grant in the following ways:

### **Grantees/Recipients**

- Are officially on record for the grant and can receive the actual funds for the grant through a grant agreement with DCEO.
- Require an MOU with subgrantees.
- Must report program participation and outcomes through the periodic performance report, periodic financial report, and other required reporting through the CEJA Reporting System.
- Must maintain program documentation for five years.

### **Subgrantees/Subrecipients**

- Are officially on record for the grant (note: if this is a program requirement).
- Require an MOU with Grantees/Recipients.
- Must report program participation and outcomes to the Grantees/Recipients.
- Must maintain program documentation for 3-5 years (note: this must be in line with the funding source and outlined in the grant agreement).
- Provide services and outcomes that are reported and managed by the Grantees/Recipients.
- Are supervised and monitored by the Grantees/Recipients.

### **Contractors/Vendors**

- Are not officially on record for the grant agreement.
- Are compensated by the Grantees/Recipients or Subgrantees/Subrecipients.
- May not require a MOU but is still recommended.
- Must report activities and services per the requirements of the Grantees/Recipients or Subgrantees/Subrecipients.
- Are supervised and monitored by the Grantees/Recipients or Subgrantees/Subrecipients.

It is important to note that contractors/vendors do not have to be a part of the grant contract but utilizing a contractor/vendor will create a procurement relationship.

**Note:** For more information about procurement policies see [Section 8: Finances, Records, and Reports](#).

**Table 1: Partnership and Provider Relationship Requirements**

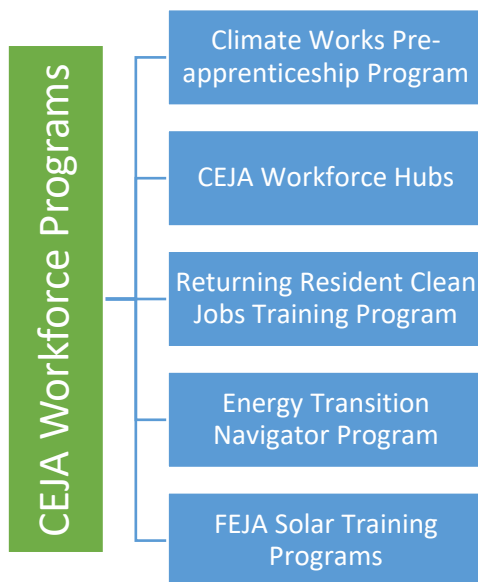
Requirements	Grantees/ Recipients	Subgrantees/ Subrecipients	Contractors/ Vendors
On Record for the Grant	Yes	Yes	
Receives Funds Directly from DCEO	Yes		
Receives Funds from Grantee through Subgrant/Contract		Yes	Yes
Requires an MOU	Yes	Yes	Recommended
Must Report Program Participation and Outcomes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Must Maintain 3-5 yrs. of Program Documentation	Yes	Yes	

Remember that the main Grantee/Recipient will be held accountable by DCEO for all grant outcomes and for following all the required program guidance. If a Subgrantee/Subrecipient or a Contractor/Vendor is not performing as agreed, they can be removed and/or replaced. However, a **Grantee/Recipient is legally responsible for executing the project as agreed with DCEO.**

## CEJA Workforce Program Partners

The Energy Transition Navigator Program is part of the larger **CEJA workforce ecosystem**, shown below. Energy Transition Navigators will, therefore, need to build partnerships with the grantees of these programs to build the clean energy workforce in Illinois.

Energy Transition Navigators will provide outreach, education, and recruitment to equity investment-eligible communities and individuals to increase participation in the CEJA workforce programs, with a special focus on the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (“Climate Works”) and the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (“CEJA Workforce Hubs”). Education will be particularly important to support potential participants and help them determine which program might be right for them. Providing information about the clean energy industry and career guidance are crucial aspects of this program. Partnerships with each of these CEJA workforce programs will lead to successful outcomes. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) may be helpful to outline responsibilities and roles between the Energy Transition Navigators and the CEJA Workforce Hubs and Climate Works grantees, as described in this manual.



### **Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (CEJA Workforce Hubs)**

Clean jobs training will be provided by CEJA Workforce Hubs in 13 regions throughout the state of Illinois. Grantees should partner with the CEJA Workforce Hub grantee in their service territory to coordinate outreach and recruitment opportunities, provide job fairs, and share outreach referrals. Energy Transition Navigators will work to connect potential participants to the CEJA Workforce Hubs. Strong coordination is required to avoid duplication of efforts and to facilitate a warm handoff.

### **Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (Climate Works)**

The Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program operates statewide to provide construction and building trades training to prepare a qualified clean energy workforce. Energy Transition Navigators will likewise need to work with Climate Works grantees to coordinate outreach and recruitment efforts and to facilitate referrals.

### **Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program (CEJA Returning Resident Program)**

Energy Transition Navigators are NOT responsible for conducting outreach and recruitment for the Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training program, as this outreach will take place inside Illinois Department of Corrections facilities. However, participants of this program who are released may need the help of Energy Transition Navigators to connect to the CEJA Workforce Hubs or Climate Works Centers upon release where they may receive additional training, barrier reduction services, and transition services. Energy Transition Navigators may coordinate with the CEJA Returning Resident Program grantees to support returning residents after release.

### **CEJA Regional Administrators**

Another key partner is the **CEJA Regional Administrator**. These DCEO employees oversee and support the CEJA workforce programs and will be an essential resource for program implementation. Get to know the Regional Administrator in your region.

- Northern Illinois Regional Administrator: Larry Dawson, [Larry.Dawson@Illinois.gov](mailto:Larry.Dawson@Illinois.gov)
- Central Illinois Regional Administrator: Nate Keener, [nate.keener@illinois.gov](mailto:nate.keener@illinois.gov)

- Southern Illinois Regional Administrator: Michelle Cerutti, [Michelle.Cerutti@Illinois.gov](mailto:Michelle.Cerutti@Illinois.gov)

### CEJA Contractor Program Partners

Energy Transition Navigators are also required to provide information about and direct people to the CEJA contractor programs, though they are not required to assist with application and intake. In their community outreach, they may encounter contractors who are interested in growing their business. Energy Transition Navigators must therefore develop partnerships with the grantees of the CEJA contractor programs to share information about these programs and to provide referrals.

- [The Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program \(“CEJA Contractor Incubators”\)](#). This program creates 13 regional incubators to provide eligible contractors with access to low-cost capital, support for obtaining insurance, assistance registering to become vendors for state incentive programs, connections with firms hiring contractors and subcontractors, and other vital services. Energy Transition Navigators will provide information about the program to potential participants and provide referrals to the program.
- [The Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program \(“Primes Accelerators”\)](#) will provide multi-year one-on-one coaching to assist contractor participants in developing business plans and growing their businesses. Participating contractors will also be eligible for operational support grants and will have access to capital for upfront project costs and pre-development funding. Energy Transition Navigators will provide information about the program to potential participants and provide referrals to the program.

### Equity Values and Partnerships

It is important that ALL partners understand that **equity** is the foundation of all the CEJA workforce programs. Trust should be established in a way that allows for honest dialogue with participants. Trust is essential for building a diverse pipeline for the Clean Energy Sector in the state of Illinois.

**ALL** partners should be receiving training on:

- CEJA equity values
- Equity eligible community dynamics
- Trauma-informed service delivery
- Culturally responsive service delivery

Each of these are critical for removing barriers and providing participants with the support they need to be successful.

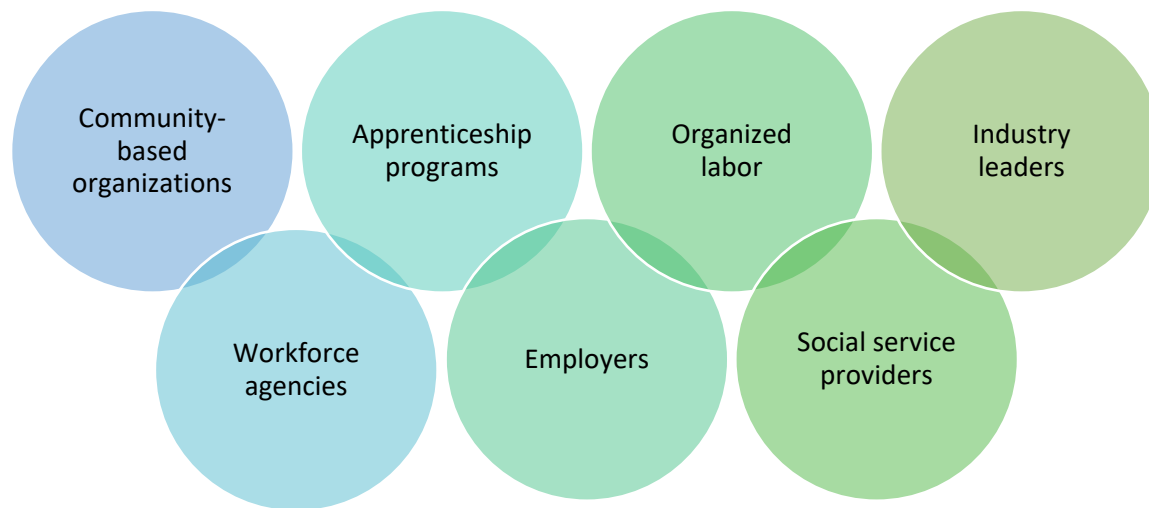
Equity training is required for the CEJA workforce program grantees, staff, and all partners receiving funding to deliver services. DCEO will provide basic equity training for all CEJA workforce program grantees and staff, including partner organizations. Additional professional development for staff and partners regarding equity may be necessary and is the responsibility of the grantee.

*Note: For more information regarding equity and professional development, see Chapter 2: Equity and Program Culture and Chapter 9: Professional Development.*

### Fostering Relationships with other Stakeholder Partners

The success of the CEJA workforce programs depends on grantees' ability to **develop partnerships** with external organizations, such as organized labor, employers, community-based organizations, and workforce agencies for apprenticeship placement, support service referrals, best practice sharing, and more. The CEJA workforce programs utilize an industry/sector partnership model to build a pipeline of qualified workers in the construction and building trades. Energy Transition Navigators will play a role in building these industry partnerships by reaching out to employers and industry leaders in their region.

Energy Transition Navigators will engage many different types of organizations, such as the ones shown in the figure below, to provide information about CEJA programs and coordinate efforts. They will engage with employers, industry leaders, trade groups, unions, and other entities providing jobs to identify local job and skill needs and to facilitate job placement. They will communicate employers' needs to the CEJA workforce programs and make recommendations to address these needs.



Consider how building relationships with these different stakeholder groups shown above can support your program goals as well as the other CEJA workforce programs.

#### Outreach and recruitment

What organizations might help with outreach and recruitment? To recruit participants, consider developing relationships with high school counselors, community-based organizations, or reentry organizations. Reach out to the local [Illinois workNet/American Jobs Center](#), or the [Regional Economic Development \(RED\) Team](#) for ideas on recruiting participants. The [CEJA Grantee Map](#) includes the location of Illinois workNet Centers (be sure to enable the appropriate layer in the map to see the centers).

Reach out to these organizations and consider ways to:

- Co-host outreach events.
- Spread the word about the program through fliers, posters, and word-of-mouth.
- Attend meetings with their clients to share information about the program.

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### Training program delivery

Energy Transition Navigators **must** engage with clean energy employers and industry leaders to find out what types of jobs are in demand and the skills, experience, and knowledge required for these jobs. Energy Transition Navigators will communicate these requirements and needs to the CEJA Workforce Hub and Climate Works grantees to help align training with the needs of employers.

Energy Transition Navigators should also inquire if jobs typically require a driver’s license or drug testing. This is helpful information to convey to CEJA Workforce Hub and Climate Works grantees so that they can prepare participants for these requirements.

Energy Transition Navigators should engage with employers to identify potential work-based learning opportunities. Work-based learning is a crucial—and required—element of the training for all of the CEJA workforce programs. If partnerships do not currently exist with employers or other organizations for work-based learning elements, developing these relationships must be a priority. Explore how employers or apprenticeship programs might:

- Provide job site practicums so that participants can have hands-on experience at a real job site.
- Provide job shadowing or field trips so that participants can see workers in action.
- Provide class visits so that participants can ask questions about employment.

Energy Transition Navigators will help the CEJA workforce programs identify employers who are able to provide work-based learning opportunities to participants.

### Apprenticeship and job placement

Energy Transition Navigators play a role in developing relationships with registered apprenticeships to facilitate apprenticeship placement through the Climate Works Program. Energy Transition Navigators will work with Climate Works grantees to engage with apprenticeship programs. Engagement may involve learning how many openings they have per year, exploring the application process, and structuring the training schedule so that participants can enter an apprenticeship program right after they complete the training. It may involve learning about the skills that apprenticeship programs expect new apprentices to have and helping participants develop these skills.

To identify the apprenticeship programs in your area, access the [CEJA Grantee Map](#) and enable the Registered Apprenticeship Program layer. Contact information for each apprenticeship program is available by clicking on the icons. You can also find registered apprenticeship programs [here](#).

It is also essential to develop relationships with clean energy employers to facilitate job placement. Energy Transition Navigators should coordinate with Climate Works and CEJA Workforce Hubs to engage employers regarding their hiring needs. Engagement may involve learning about job openings, exploring the application and referral process, and then communicating this information to the CEJA workforce programs.

The Illinois Power Agency’s [Energy Equity Portal](#) maintains a list of job openings in the clean energy industry. Ameren Illinois (in partnership with Springfield Urban League) maintains a vetted [list of Illinois job openings in energy efficiency](#). Consider contacting these employers to discuss ways you can help them fill these job openings.

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Clean energy employers include, but may not be limited to:

- [Illinois Shines Approved Vendors](#) (solar developers/installers)
- [Illinois Solar for All Approved Vendors](#) (solar developers/installers)
- [Ameren Illinois Business Program Ally Contractors](#) (network of contractors who offer energy efficiency solutions for businesses and public sector facilities in Ameren Illinois territory)
- [Ameren Illinois Residential Program Allies](#) (network of contractors who offer energy efficiency solutions for residential properties in Ameren Illinois territory)
- [ComEd Energy Efficiency Service Providers--Businesses](#) (network of contractors who offer energy efficiency services in ComEd territory for businesses and public sector organizations)
- The local [Community Action Agency](#) to find out if they are hiring people for the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program.
- The [IllinoisJobLink.com](#)
- The [Network & Connect Illinois workNet Service Finder](#) is a free service for Illinois residents and employers that offers many great service providers and programs that are available throughout Illinois to help you get through tough times. These services and programs provide support to help you reach your training and employment goals.
- State of Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion [CEI BEP Diversity Management System](#)
- PDF of [Equity Eligible Contractor AVs as of 3-15-2024](#) (AVs who are currently suspended or who discontinued operations highlighted in ORANGE AVs who have withdrawn in good standing or have become inactive in the Program highlighted in BLUE.
- The Illinois Commerce Commission maintains a Utility Company Database of companies required to receive a certificate from the Illinois Commerce Commission. These include energy efficiency providers, electric vehicle charging station installers (or maintainers), and distributed generation. Search for companies [here](#).

The [Regional Economic Development \(RED\) Team](#) can assist with connecting to business partners. The economic regional boundaries are available in the [CEJA Grantee Map](#) (enable the Economic Development Region layer).

When communicating with employers and apprenticeship programs, identify the value proposition: what's in it for them?

By partnering with the CEJA workforce programs, employers and apprenticeship programs can:

- Access qualified candidates with basic construction skills, fundamental clean energy knowledge, and essential employability skills.
- Meet minimum equity or supplier diversity requirements for participation in state solar, wind, and energy efficiency programs.
- Make commitments to diversify their workforce.
- Grow their businesses to take advantage of clean energy project funding.

## Managing Relationships with Partners

When establishing relationships with stakeholder partners, it's important to clarify the expectations of the relationship. Especially with employers and apprenticeship programs, explain what is expected of them in terms of:



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- Hiring program graduates.
- Offering work-based learning opportunities.
- Supporting participants after hire.
- Tracking outcomes.
- Communicating with staff about participant needs.

A Memorandum of Understanding may be helpful to clarify roles and responsibilities with stakeholder partners. An informal agreement may also be acceptable.

Note: If the partner is receiving program funds to deliver program elements, there **MUST** be an MOU.

## Tracking Partner Engagements

The **CEJA Reporting System** allows grantees to track partner engagements with stakeholders. Through the Partner Engagement tab, grantees will track partner relationships and engagement, including the type of partner (i.e., business association, industry association, employer, government organization, public university or college, community college, vocational technical school, private for-profit training, high school, and union). This type of tracking is critical for programs to develop a robust and ever-growing network of partners.

DCEO will look at partner recruitment and engagement data as one of the key metrics denoting grantee success. For technical instructions on how to track partner recruitment and engagement, visit the resource page of the Energy Transition Navigator Partner Guide. Tracking partner relationships will also enable you to share contacts with other CEJA grantees to coordinate engagement efforts and avoid duplication of efforts.

## Leveraged Resources

DCEO encourages Energy Transition Navigators to maximize the use of their resources and minimize duplication of efforts through system alignment, leveraging alternate funding, network building, and information sharing. Leveraged resources can include the following:

- **Co-enrollment:** In addition to enrolling in Climate Works or the Workforce Hubs, participants may also qualify for other programs, such as the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA), that can offer critical services for participants. The CEJA workforce programs allow co-enrollment with specific programs; however, it is essential to note eligibility or ineligibility for other services does not and should not impact a grantee's decision to accept the participant into the pre-apprenticeship program. Note that participants cannot be co-enrolled in more than one CEJA workforce program at the same time (i.e., they cannot be co-enrolled in Climate Works and the CEJA Workforce Hubs).
- **Alternate Funding:** Energy Transition Navigator grantees are not required to seek out additional programming funding. However, if grantees are interested in securing alternate funding or in-kind resources for service support or to help improve the cost-effectiveness of their programming, this is allowable and encouraged. Various other state, federal, and private programs exist and may provide an opportunity to expand the capacity of CEJA programming.
- **Service Networks:** Many grantees have informal or formal relationships with other community-based organizations. These networks can be invaluable in helping to enhance existing programs

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and services. Informal relationships may consist of referral networks, while formal relationships may be solidified in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Grantees that leverage their networks may provide participants with a more robust menu of support services.

- **Resource and Best Practice Sharing:** DCEO will offer grantees a suite of tools and resources based on industry best practices available throughout their grant year. Grantees are encouraged to utilize the tools available in this manual and in the Energy Transition Navigator Partner Guide. DCEO also encourages grantees to contact their fellow CEJA grantees to pull from the network's collective knowledge and experience. DCEO will host technical assistance webinars and other events to share best practices and provide a space to network among grantees.