



Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program

2024-25 Program Manual

Chapter 4: Partnerships

Chapter Overview

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

- Ensure partners comply with program requirements (i.e., grantees/recipients, subgrantees/subrecipients, and contractors/vendors).
- Explore the partnerships you may wish to develop with other CEJA program grantees.
- Develop strategic partnerships to support program success.
- Track partnerships in the CEJA Reporting System.
- Establish partnerships experienced with meeting the needs of returning residents.
- Leverage recommended resources.

Partner Roles

While grantees may have expertise in one or more required program areas, it may be necessary to leverage the support of strategic partners. Strategic partnerships can be essential to comprehensive program implementation and long-term success. Below are common partner roles.

- **Grantees/Recipients:** 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 upon the release of a Returning Resident Program participant.

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 11: 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

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partnership must be clearly delineated in a **Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)**, which establishes the expectations for each party in the agreement.

Note: MOUs outline the intention of the partnerships however, they are not legally enforceable documents. Given this, subaward agreements with subgrantees/subrecipients require more formality. For information about relationship requirements, 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/funding source
- 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.
- Are ultimately responsible to DCEO for the terms of the overall grant agreement.
- Require an MOU or subaward agreement 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 or subaward agreement 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.
- Receive program funds from the Grantee.

Contractors/Vendors

- Are not officially on record for the grant agreement.
- Are compensated by the Grantees/Recipients or Subgrantees/Subrecipients.
- May not require an MOU and/or contract but is still recommended.

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- 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 11: 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
Subaward Agreement	Yes	Yes	Recommended
Must Report Program Participation and Outcomes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Must Maintain 3-5 yrs. of Program Documentation	Yes	Yes	

Keep in mind that the main Grantee/Recipient will be held accountable by DCEO for all grant outcomes and for following all of 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.**

Note: Informal relationships may consist of volunteer networks, unfunded partners, and referral systems. While formal relationships may be solidified in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), grantees that leverage their informal relationships and professional networks, may provide participants with a more robust menu of supportive services. Informal relationships may not require an MOU however an MOU is recommended.

CEJA Ecosystem

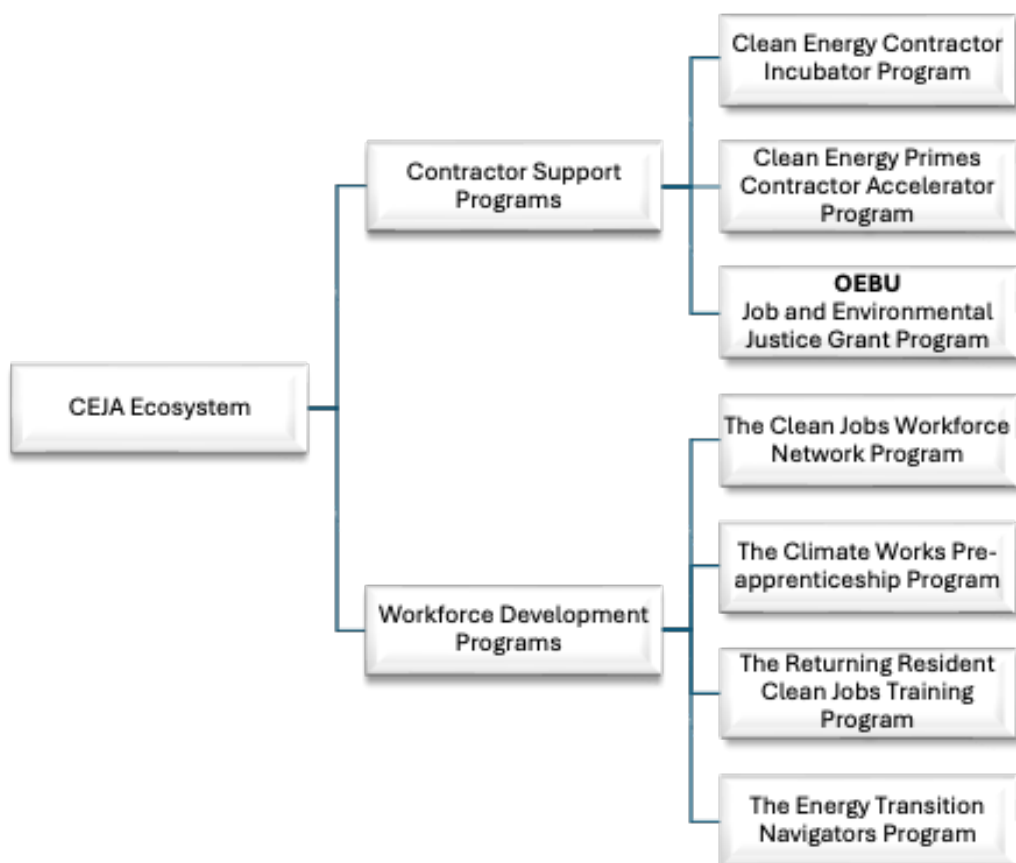
The CEJA Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program is part of the larger **CEJA Workforce Program Ecosystem**. Grantees will, therefore, need to coordinate closely with the grantees of these programs to build the clean energy workforce in Illinois. The ability to partner within the CEJA ecosystem will be critical to ensuring the effective, efficient, and successful transition of returning residents, particularly those who are being released prior to the completion of their program. See the graphic below.

Note: The [CEJA Grantee Map](#) includes the location of the Centers (be sure to enable the appropriate layer in the map to see the centers).

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Consider how partnerships with each of the programs in the ecosystem might support the success of the Returning Resident Program. 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.

The CEJA ecosystem programs were established or expanded by this groundbreaking legislation. The CEJA programs are organized by the following categories, the **Contractor Support Programs**, **Workforce Development Programs** and the **OEBU**.



Contractor Support Programs

The **Contractor Support Programs** provide upfront capital, training, and business development guidance to support the growth and success of projects, businesses, community organizations, and jobs that create opportunities for disadvantaged populations. The following CEJA Contractor Support Programs are administered by DCEO through the Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, and Technology (EIT):

- [Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program](#) will focus on equitably growing the clean energy workforce to meet the demand for clean energy technologies and services. This program will increase business opportunities for clean energy contractors and nonprofits and help grow contractor businesses that will be able to take advantage of opportunities in the clean energy sector.

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- [Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program](#) will focus on contractors seeking to expand their capacity and fill the role of the primary contractor on clean energy projects through a structured five-year program with mentorship, operation, support, grants, business, coaching, assistance, applying for certifications, procurement programs, and preparing bids.

The following CEJA Contractor Support Program is administered by DCEO through the Office of Energy and Business Utility (EBU):

- [Job and Environmental Justice Grant Program](#) will focus on providing upfront support for the development of projects, businesses, community organizations, and jobs, creating opportunities for historically disadvantaged populations, and support community ownership of renewable energy projects (including community solar).

Workforce Development Programs

The **Workforce Development Programs** invest in training a diverse workforce for the clean energy industry of the future and help clean energy businesses grow. The CEJA workforce programs will help accelerate the adoption of clean energy sources, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency efforts. Historically, these workforce investments have not benefited all of Illinois communities and workers. These CEJA workforce programs will invigorate and diversify the clean energy workforce in Illinois. The following CEJA Workforce Programs are being administered by DCEO's Office of Employment and Training (OET):

- [The Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program \(also known as Workforce Hubs\)](#) creates 14 regional hubs to deliver clean jobs training to participants using a standard clean jobs curriculum framework, preparing them for various entry-level clean energy jobs. Hubs will recruit, pre-screen, and offer clean energy training. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction funding is included in this program. Workforce Hub grantees and affiliated organizations will be some of the most important partners for the Returning Resident Program. Many returning residents will not remain in the geographic location where they were previously incarcerated. Returning Resident Program grantees should be able to assist with transitioning participants to another program within the ecosystem, advanced training, or employment. Workforce Hubs can also connect returning resident participants to wraparound support services and employers who are specifically looking to hire candidates with solar and/or HVAC skills.
- [The Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program](#) is a statewide initiative designed to create a qualified, diverse pipeline of workers prepared for careers in construction, building trades, and clean energy job opportunities. The Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program recruits, pre-screens, and provides pre-apprenticeship skills training. Energy Transition Barrier Reduction funding is included in this program. Climate Works provides pre-apprenticeships in the construction and building trades in three large regions in the state of Illinois. Returning Resident Program grantees may partner with Climate Works grantees to coordinate learning opportunities for returning resident participants prior to and after release, provide job fairs with

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employers and trainers who actively hire returning residents, or share outreach contact referrals.

- [The Energy Transition Navigators Program](#) will focus on outreach, education, and recruitment to equity investment-eligible communities and individuals to increase participation in the CEJA workforce programs, including the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program and the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program. Energy Transition Navigators will provide support and career guidance for participants enrolling in the CEJA Workforce Programs.
- [The Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program](#) will deliver clean jobs training, using a standard clean jobs curriculum framework, to people in the custody of the Department of Corrections. The goal is to prepare people for entry-level clean energy jobs upon release.

These are highly interconnected clean energy programs that set forth goals and policies to accelerate the adoption of clean energy sources, electric vehicles, and energy efficiency. The Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program will be required to collaborate and coordinate with the other CEJA workforce development and economic development programs as they become available.

CEJA Regional Administrators

A key partner for grantees is the **CEJA Regional Administrators**. These DCEO employees oversee and support the CEJA workforce programs and will be an essential resource for program implementation. Grantees should get to know the regional administrator in their region.

- Northern Illinois Regional Administrator: Larry Dawson, Larry.Dawson@Illinois.gov
- Central Illinois Regional Administrator: Nate Keener, Nate.Keener@Illinois.gov
- Southern Illinois Regional Administrator: Michelle Cerutti, Michelle.Cerutti@Illinois.gov

Equity Values

It is important that ALL partners understand that **equity** is the foundation of all 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 educated on:

- CEJA equity values
- Diversity among equity eligible individuals
- Equity eligible community dynamics

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

Trauma-informed practice is the ability to recognize the link between trauma, social, and academic challenges. It helps ensure that people feel safe and are not re-traumatized by their engagement with

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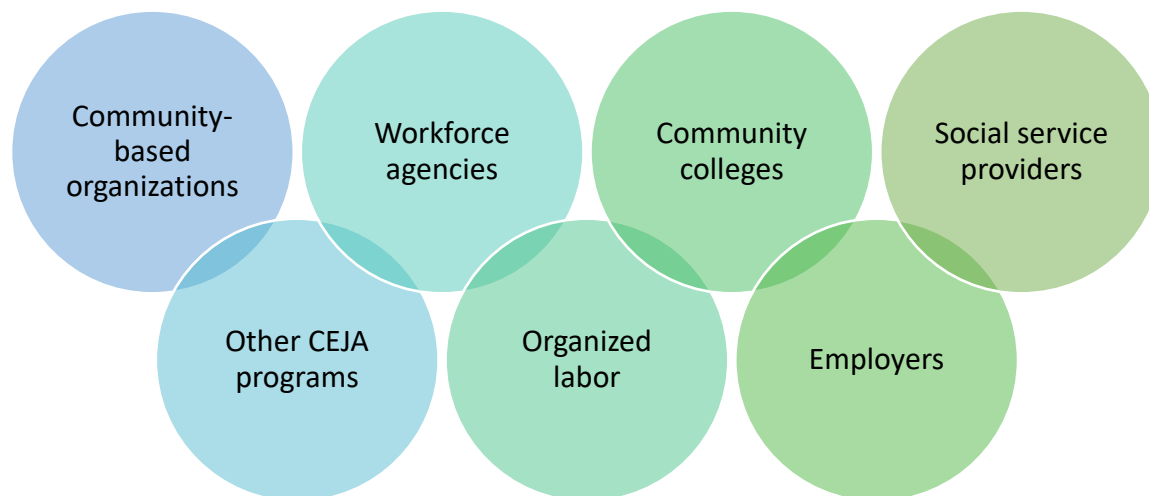
the CEJA workforce ecosystem. Trauma informed practices should be a component of the professional development provided for partners with the goal of enabling them to best support program participants, including how to assess and determine when there is a need for mental health counseling. Trauma-informed practices can help cultivate trust.

Note: For more information regarding professional development opportunities, see Chapter 9: Professional Development.

For more information about the program culture, core values, and equity goals, see Chapter 2: Equity and Program Culture.

Developing Partnerships

The success of the CEJA workforce ecosystem depends on grantees' ability to **develop partnerships** with external organizations, such as organized labor, employers, community-based organizations, and workforce agencies for job placement, supportive service referrals, best practice sharing, and more.



Many of these partnerships may already exist. Continue cultivating these relationships. Consider which type of partnerships will support the different program elements. Most of your significant partnerships will relate to participant release and transition, but not all.

Outreach and recruitment: Outreach strategies should be designed to help returning residents make informed decisions about their participation in the CEJA Returning Resident Clean Job Training Program. Outreach and recruitment work is done in coordination with IDOC to inform individuals eligible to participate in the designated facilities. Solidifying enrollment, timing of training, release dates, and the process for potential waitlists will be important components of the process.

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Consider ways to:

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

Note: Grantees should partner with each correctional facility to determine the best way to share information about the program.

Supportive service delivery: Supportive services consist of wraparound services, student support services, and transition services. Leveraging formal and informal partnerships with other service providers can help meet the needs of program participants, particularly upon release.

For example, student support services may require a partnership with math tutors who has specific trade and construction math qualification to support program completion while participants are incarcerated. Upon release, wrap around services like transportation may be necessary to ensure participants can get to their job interview. Lastly, transition services can help facilitate a formal handoff from the Returning Resident Program to the Energy Transition Navigator, Workforce Hubs, or Climate Works Program to ensure participants complete their training and earn their credentials.

Referrals to other organizations will be more effective if relationships are developed before they are needed. Outreach to organizations that provide food, housing, transportation assistance, legal assistance, mental health services, substance use treatment, and more. Determine how warm hand-offs will be facilitated, services will be paid for, and service delivery will be supported. More than any other CEJA program, the Returning Resident Program must be cognizant of geography because participants may not live in the same geographic location where they were incarcerated. Coordinate with IDOC, the Workforce Hubs, and other organizations to prepare participants for their release.

Training program delivery: Practical skills are a crucial element of the CEJA Returning Resident curriculum. If partnerships do not currently exist with employers, guest speakers, or work-based learning post-release, developing these relationships must be a priority. Explore how employers or apprenticeship programs might provide these opportunities.

Job placement: It is essential to develop relationships with employers in clean energy and discuss how your pipeline of graduates can support their hiring needs.

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. Determining employer willingness to hire and advocating for the hire of returning residents with these employers is of the utmost importance.

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

- 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, and distributed generation installers. Search for companies [here](#)
- [Illinois Shines Approved Vendors](#) (solar developers/installers)
- [Illinois Solar for All Approved Vendors](#) (solar developers/installers)

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- [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)
- Contact your local [Community Action Agency](#) to find out if they are hiring people for the Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program
- [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 get people through tough times. These services and programs provide support to help 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](#)
- The Guidebook that allows for the implementation of the curriculum and provides information on all necessary and useful resources for program participants and graduates. (*Note: Development is in progress.*)
- The Hiring Returning Residents handbook shall be made available on the Department's website (*Note: Development is in progress.*)

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 their value proposition: what's in it for them?

By partnering with CEJA programs, employers can:

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

Managing Relationships with Partners

Though not required for all partnerships, DCEO strongly recommends developing a **Memorandum of Understanding** with partners to clarify the expectations of the relationship. Especially with employers and apprenticeship programs, it is essential to explain what is expected in terms of:

- Hiring program graduates
- Offering work-based learning opportunities
- Supporting participants after hire

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- Tracking outcomes
- Communicating with staff about participant needs

How will information about participants be shared? How will support be provided to participants who are hired by employers? What information is needed to report program outcomes? These questions will be answered in subsequent chapters.

A sample Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) can be found on workNet in the CEJA Returning Resident Clear Jobs Training Program Partner Guide.

Tracking Partner Engagements

The **CEJA Reporting System** allows grantees to track partner engagements. Through the Partner Engagement tab, grantees will track partner relationships and engagement, including the type of partner (i.e., business association, community college, union, social service agency, and employer, among others), and the services the partner offers (i.e., supportive services, job site training, other instruction, and daycare, among others). 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 CEJA Returning Resident Clear Jobs Training Program Partner Guide. Tracking partner relationships will also enable you to share contacts with other CEJA grantees, such as the Workforce Hubs, to coordinate engagement and avoid duplication of efforts.

Leveraged Resources

DCEO encourages its grantees 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 the Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program, participants may also qualify for other programs. The CEJA Returning Resident Program allows 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 program. Note that participants cannot be co-enrolled in another CEJA program (such as the Climate Works Program). Upon release, participants should be Exited from the Returning Resident Program and grantee staff should coordinate participant enrollment in another CEJA programs to complete training, connect them with an apprenticeship program, or assist them in finding clean energy employment.

Note: Participants cannot be co-enrolled in another CEJA program (such as the Climate Works Program).

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- **Alternate Funding:** CEJA does not require grantees 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 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 CEJA Returning Resident Partner Guide. DCEO also encourages grantees to contact their fellow CEJA grantees to pull from their collective knowledge and experience. DCEO will also host technical assistance webinars and other events to share best practices and provide a space to network among grantees.

Resources

See the CEJA Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program Partner Guide for a sample Memorandum of Understanding.