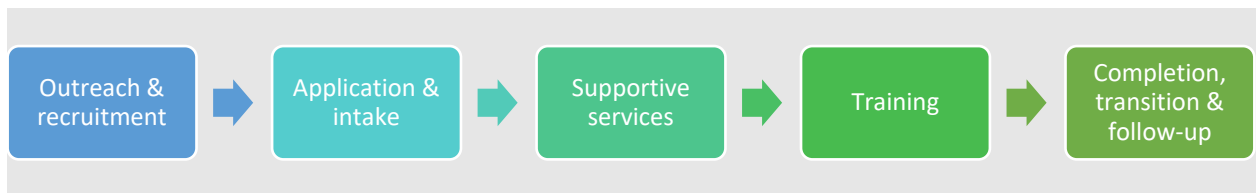




Illinois Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program 2024-25 Program Manual

Chapter 8: Wrap-around Services and Transition Services

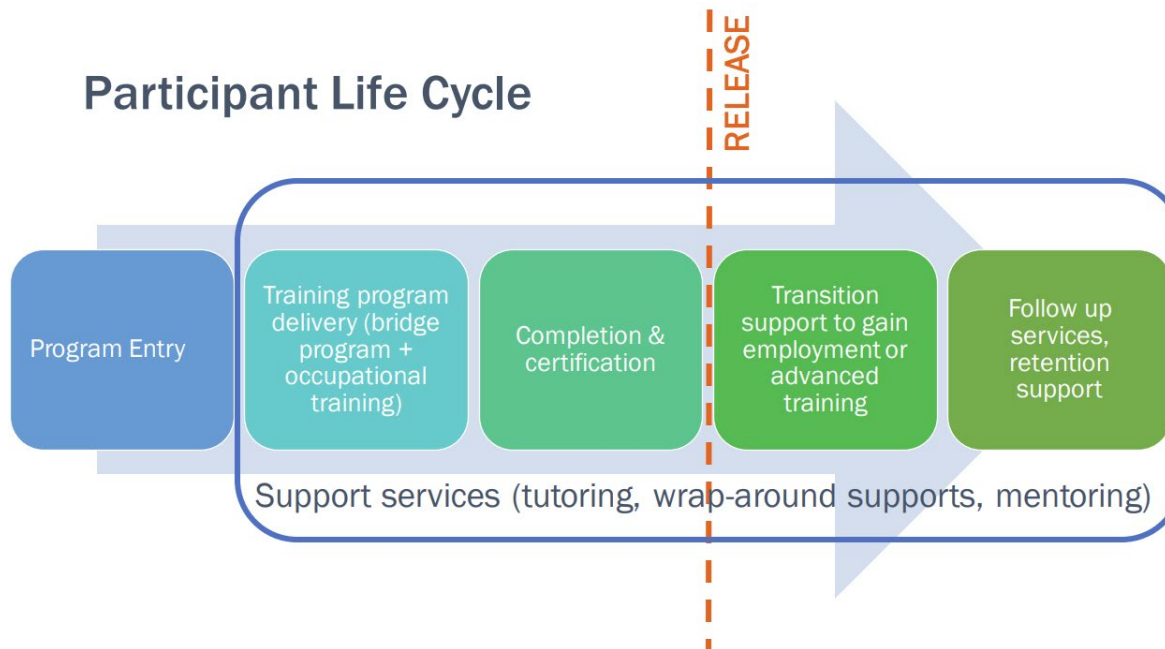


Chapter Overview

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

- Apply CEJA Reporting System statuses throughout the participant life cycle.
- Prepare for program participant out-date and mandatory supervised release (MSE) scenarios.
- Appropriately update participants' program completion status using the out-date scenarios.
- Complete required assessments.
- Describe transition staff responsibilities.
- Provide supportive services (transition services, wrap-around services, and follow-up services) shortly before out-date and during mandatory supervised release.
- Differentiate between active follow-up versus long-term follow-up.
- Integrate the core values of diversity, welcoming and inclusion, accessibility, belonging, and equity into all elements of your program's transition services and follow-up activities.

Participant Life Cycle and Statuses



Grantees will enter participant **statuses** in the **CEJA Reporting System** based on a number of variables within the **Participant Life Cycle** shown above, including level of training completion, their out-date scenario (see below), and their need for **supportive services** from the Returning Residents Program. The following designations explore these variables and help Returning Residents Program grantees follow and advance their participants in the CEJA Reporting System.

Statuses include:

- Enrolled (In Progress)
- Co-enrolled
- Complete
- Exited
- Withdrawn

Enrolled (In Progress)

Returning Residents Program participants who have received orientation, completed associated recruitment steps (see Chapter 5), and elected to pursue training through the CEJA Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program should be entered into the CEJA Reporting System as **Enrolled**. Enrolled participants are currently receiving program services.

Co-Enrollment

A Returning Residents Program participant who is released before completing training has the option to **Co-enroll** (see page 6) with another CEJA program (Climate Works or Workforce Hubs) and receive

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wrap-around services and transition services through a cost-sharing agreement between both the Returning Residents Program and either a Climate Works or Workforce Hubs program.

In this context, a participant would receive services and case management from both programs. Once training begins in the second CEJA program, that participant would **Exit with Follow Up** (see below) from the Returning Residents Program; they would remain Enrolled with the other CEJA program, resulting in a co-enrollment.

Complete

Complete status refers to the conclusion of training instruction. It applies to program participants who have completed program training services and are still receiving career/transition services and/or wrap-around services. For many participants, program completion will mark the end of their instructional training and the beginning of their transition to a clean energy job, Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP), or advanced training program in clean energy. Participants should complete *both* the bridge program component *and* a job-specific training option, as described in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework for Returning Residents in Chapter 7.

Completion occurs when the participant has achieved both of the following:

1. Met the testing and attendance requirements outlined in the Bridge Program component of the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework (see Chapter 7), including:
 - a. Receiving a satisfactory grade on post-assessments (70% or higher).
 - b. Attending at least 80% of the sessions related to Essential Employability Skills and Clean Energy Basics.
 - c. Meeting requirements to receive OSHA 10 and First Aid/CPR certifications.
 - d. Completing all hands-on learning training requirements associated with the bridge program curriculum.
2. Met the testing and attendance requirements outlined in one or more job-specific training options, as described in the Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework, including:
 - a. Receiving a satisfactory grade on post-assessments (70% or higher).
 - b. Attending at least 80% of the sessions for each module.
 - c. Meeting requirements to prepare for certification exams.
 - d. Completing all hands-on learning training requirements.

Successful completion of the bridge program and the job-specific training will be reported in the CEJA Reporting System. Those who successfully complete both of these two training elements are referred to as **Complete**. Complete is distinct from **program graduates**. Program graduates have finished the CEJA training, concluded supportive services, transitioned to a primary or secondary outcome, and have begun receiving active follow-up.

Note: *At minimum, follow-up must occur over the course of a 12-month period, to be extended at the discretion of the program administrator.*

Grantees may choose to organize celebratory ceremonies for individuals who complete within the confines and guidelines of respective IDOC facilities.

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Exit

Returning Residents Program individuals who complete should continue to receive transition services as they prepare for their out-dates and career placement.

- Participants **Exit** the program once they complete the training program and no longer receive any supportive services or withdraw from their training program.
- Participants who exit the program after completing all training requirements and who no longer receive any supportive services will receive follow up for longitudinal tracking purposes (see page 19). The status for these participants changes to **Exit with Follow Up**.
- A participant who exits the program may return to the Returning Residents Program if they are still in the custody of IDOC or participating in another CEJA program after release, but they would need to connect to a navigator to complete **intake**.

Withdrawal

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

- Lack of interest in the clean energy industry
- Life change requiring full-time employment
- Illness
- IDOC- or grantee-initiated withdrawal due to disciplinary issue or transfer to another facility

Before a participant's withdrawal is finalized, the student services staff must meet with the participant to determine if there are any services that can be offered to keep the participant from withdrawing. In some circumstances, additional support 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 student services 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. Grantees must also ask if follow-up contact would be welcomed. In some cases, individuals may connect with a navigator for intake at a future date.

Note: A hard copy of the Exit Interview Questionnaire is available in the CEJA Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program Partner Guide.

In some cases, a participant may withdraw and not tell anyone. Student services staff must attempt to contact the participant via phone or by speaking with IDOC personnel familiar with the participant to confirm the participant's withdrawal, establish a reason for the withdrawal, inquire about the possibility of meeting to discuss additional student 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 even if no contact is made.

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

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that outlines a standard procedure for how, when, and why participants can be dismissed. Once dismissal has been confirmed, all services 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 grantee.

Participants who withdraw or are dismissed, exit the program.

Note: *Withdrawal reasons should be added to the CEJA Reporting System as a **Case Note** for the participant.*

Returning Residents Out-Date Scenarios

A **mandatory supervised release (MSR)** is the day that an individual is scheduled to be released from IDOC custody. Once an individual reaches this out-date, they will begin a period of **mandatory supervised release (MSR)**. Residents may be eligible for early release in Illinois if they earn sentence credit.

Note: *For example, eligible inmates can earn up to 50% of their sentence as "Good Time" credit, which means that for each day served in prison, one day may be subtracted from their sentence.*

Out-date scenarios refer to the possible situations that Returning Residents Program participants and grantees may encounter towards the end of training and/or upon release from IDOC facilities. These scenarios, listed in the initial program Notice of Funding Opportunity, include:

1. Participants may be released sooner than expected and need additional training support after release.
2. Because people are eligible to participate 36 months before their out-date, participants may complete training a long time ahead of their release.
3. Participants may be released to communities far from the correctional facilities and the Returning Residents Program grantees' service delivery areas.
4. Participants may not know where they will be released until shortly before their out-date.

Each of these scenarios requires forethought and tailored approaches depending on the situation. This manual will address each of these scenarios, and the appropriate participant statuses to aid in reporting and follow up.

Out-Date Scenario 1: Enrolled (In Progress) - Participant Released Before Completion of Training

Some participants may begin training but are unable to complete because they have not met all program requirements before their out-date (e.g., failed certification exams, did not attend the required number of training sessions, etc.). Returning Residents Program grantees should provide student support services (see chapter 7) to ensure that these participants can meet program training requirements before their out-dates.

If participants cannot complete their training due to failed exams, missed lessons, and/or they are released before training concludes, Returning Residents Program grantees must work swiftly and

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diligently to provide transition services and coordinate with other CEJA and State of Illinois workforce development programs. In particular, grantees should coordinate with their Energy Transition Navigator to give the **in-progress** participant options to continue CEJA training through the nearest Workforce Hub or Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program.

In these instances, Returning Residents Program participants are marked as or retain the “In Progress” status in the CEJA Reporting System. They are enrolled and have started receiving program services, but their training may be interrupted by missed classes or transition from custody within an IDOC facility to their mandatory supervised release following their out-date. Supportive services 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 before release, while others might need to complete specific modules before release, particularly if they were absent from any classes.

If participants need to wait for a new cohort to retake modules or because their release and previous training up to that point did not correspond well to the curriculum of another CEJA program outside the IDOC facility, grantees must continue engagement with the participants to ensure they can **transition** into another CEJA program and successfully complete their training. Transferring into another CEJA program already in progress may be a viable option for Returning Residents participants who are released before completing training if another CEJA training curriculum parallels the work they have already completed while inside. Returning Residents Program grantees must work closely with Energy Transition Navigators and other CEJA program grantee organizations to make sure coordination and timing of release does not result in participant **withdrawal** or other service gaps. Participants who do not complete their Returning Residents Program training requirements must do so as part of another CEJA program within two calendar years from the start of their training. A participant who does not complete the requirements within two years must connect with a navigator and complete their intake process to enroll in the program again.

Release Prior to Completion and Co-enrollment

Returning Residents Program grantees must change the status of participants who are released prior to completing their training within an IDOC facility to **Release Prior to Completion**. These participants have the option to co-enroll in another CEJA program.

Co-enrollment refers to a possible scenario in which a Returning Residents Program participant does not finish their clean energy training before their out-date and is then enrolled in another CEJA workforce program while they are still enrolled in the Returning Residents Program to maintain needed supportive services until they are able to conclude their CEJA training. A participant can be co-enrolled in the Returning Residents Program *and* another CEJA program or Illinois workforce program (such as [American Job Centers / Illinois WorkNet Centers](#)) to receive transition and wrap-around services and training. In a co-enrollment situation, the Returning Residents Program grantee, the applicable Energy Transition Navigator, and either the applicable Workforce Hub or Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program grantee coordinate to enroll the participant in the current or next cohort of their program, depending on curricular alignment.

Close coordination is extremely important in this context, which can be decided on a case-by-case basis with the help of the Energy Transition Navigator to determine next steps. If this situation arises, the

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Returning Residents Program grantee should organize a meeting with their Energy Transition Navigator and applicable Workforce Hub and Pre-apprenticeship Program grantees to put a plan into place.

Lesson and review materials could benefit them as they await the training transfer or start of the next Workforce Hub or Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program cohort. Services may also include helping co-enrollees to find temporary/transitional employment while waiting for their next training program to begin. Co-enrollment allows Returning Residents Program grantees to continue to deliver wrap-around services, but it also allows for cost-sharing and delivery of services by the other CEJA program grantee organizations, depending on the agreed upon plan. The Energy Transition Navigator should help the participant understand their options for services, other training programs, and what to do during any possible waiting periods between training.

In the CEJA Reporting System, **co-enrollment** begins as soon as the participant receives services through another CEJA program in addition to the wrap-around and transition services provided by the Returning Residents Program grantee. Both CEJA programs should track completion of training and record outcomes for that participant. The Returning Residents Program grantee should not record a successful transition until the participant starts receiving training from another CEJA program.

Out-Date Scenario 2: Participant Completes Training Ahead of Schedule

In this scenario, a program participant **Completes** after finishing both sets of required curricula, but they do so many months or a year ahead of their release date. While enrolled participants will receive some prioritization based on their corresponding out-dates, some participants may experience a long wait between training completion and release. It is important for Returning Residents Program grantees to assist individuals who complete during this phase of the program with career and transition services detailed later in this manual chapter (see page 6). These include providing career information, resume writing, interview preparation, assistance with completing an application, job application assistance, and information about further training opportunities and job referrals individuals who complete can pursue upon release. Returning Residents Program grantee transition staff should also work closely with training staff to provide necessary study and review materials for individuals who complete to help them retain training information and knowledge during this period before release.

Out-Date Scenarios 3 and 4: Participant Released Far from Service Area or Release Location Not Initially Known

If a Returning Residents Program individual who completes is released far from a grantee's service area or the release location is not initially known, the grantee organization must ensure a warm handoff for that individual to a nearby CEJA Provider. Energy Transition Navigator teams should be aware of these situations and help in transitioning individuals who complete to clean energy jobs, first and foremost; a non-clean energy job, secondarily; or further training opportunities. The navigator organization must be apprised of transition and wrap-around service needs so they can refer the individual to the appropriate nearby providers.

If the Returning Residents Program individual who completes will not be released anywhere near another CEJA Provider, including any Energy Transition Navigator, the Returning Residents Program grantee must make a warm handoff to the nearest Illinois workNet Center.

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Note: Status changes in the CEJA Reporting system will depend on training completion. Refer to scenario 1 and Scenario 2 above.

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.

Returning Residents will be required to complete a paper copy of the survey, and the transition service staff person will need to enter the information into the reporting system. All responses to this survey will remain confidential. 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 clean energy job opportunities and advanced training programs and help them gain employment. Grantees should assist participants with applications, prepare them for testing, help with other employment or entry requirements, and involve participants in relevant industry events once they have been released (e.g., career fairs, trade-related networking events, etc.). Transition services begin well before the completion of the program—especially as Returning Residents Program participants near their out-dates—and continue after participants have successfully completed the instructional component of the program.

Transition staff are responsible for transition and follow-up services. Their work with participants will take place primarily at the end of the participant's time in the program. Transition services may include providing career information, resume writing, interview preparation, 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 or CEJA Provider, among others. Program funds may be used for any application fees. Some of these services can be provided while participants are completing their training.

Transition staff must also dedicate time to building relationships with employers, training programs, registered apprenticeship programs, and contractors to set up connections and resources for participants once they are ready to transition. Responsibilities include, but may not be limited to:

- Developing and maintaining relationships with transition partners including clean energy employers, DOL-registered apprenticeship programs, community colleges, and contractors/construction employers, among others.
- Working with transition partners including employers to provide transition services such as interview practice, job fairs, classroom visits, and more.

Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan

The transition staff will begin transition services by working with participants to complete the **Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan**.

Note: A copy of the *Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan* is available in the *CEJA Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program Partner Guide*.

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This Assessment and Plan is completed three to four weeks prior to the end of training. It is intended to determine participants' skill levels, service needs, barriers to employment or apprenticeship placement, occupational goals, and career pathway. It addresses 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.

The completed Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan should be uploaded into the CEJA Reporting System under the participant's file uploads area.

Updating Career Goals in the CEJA Reporting System

Information from the Pre-transition Career Assessment and Plan must be used to update participants' career goals in the CEJA Reporting System. Recall that participants are asked to set career goals during the intake process when they complete the initial Career Assessment (see chapter 6). Their career goals may or may not have changed as they progress through the training program. They may now know more about the different types of jobs or apprenticeship programs they are interested in pursuing. As they near the end of the training program, they will have the opportunity to refine their career goals, set new ones, and discuss the steps needed to achieve those goals. Make sure participants' career goals are updated in the CEJA Reporting System.

Tracking Transition/Career Services in the CEJA Reporting System

The Pre-Transition Career Assessment and Plan also asks participants a series of questions about the transition/career services that they would like to receive to assist them with their transition to a job, registered apprenticeship, or advanced training program.

The transition services that they select must be recorded and tracked in the CEJA Reporting System. Grantee personnel can select them in the drop-down services menu in the Career Plan section of the CEJA Reporting System. Transition staff must regularly update the system to show which transition services they have provided. The table below shows the transition/career services that can be selected in the CEJA Reporting System. Keep in mind that these services must be provided in a manner that aligns with IDOC security protocols while within IDOC facilities. Career fairs, for instance, will have to take place outside of facilities and are only available to participants who have been released.

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.

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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.

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

Wrap-around Support Services

In contrast to the Workforce Hubs and Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship programs, Returning Residents Program grantees will not be able to begin offering wrap-around services to program participants—or even refer them to other service organizations and partners—until just prior their release dates. Returning Residents Program grantees must work closely with IDOC, their own service provider staff, and any relevant partners to make sure participants nearing their release will have adequate support to continue their clean energy career pursuits.

Note: EJP’s Reentry Guide: [Mapping Your Future](#) is a great resource that provides information about the wrap-around support needs people will likely have and how to address them.

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To this end, Returning Residents Program grantee staff will complete the **Service Needs Assessment** as part of the intake process for each prospective participant. However, there will be several questions related to wrap-around services that will not yet apply to returning residents while they are incarcerated within IDOC facilities (e.g., transportation, childcare, healthcare, housing, and technology). These particular wrap-around services questions should be skipped during the initial assessment but should be re-assessed two weeks prior to participant out-dates.

The goal of **wrap-around services** is to **minimize or remove barriers** so that participants have an equitable opportunity to complete training and transition to employment, advanced training in clean energy, or a Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP).

The Illinois Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program focuses on individuals affected by the justice system and who have been underrepresented in the clean energy industry. Grantees are expected to identify and address barriers that may impede this group from completing the training, entering an apprenticeship program, or gaining employment in clean energy. Many complex and interconnected barriers can hinder a participant's access to employment opportunities. For instance, racism and sexism may intersect with an African American mother's need for childcare and transportation, exacerbating exclusion from an industry traditionally dominated by white males.

CEJA Returning Residents Program grantees will provide wrap-around support services and referrals to address these structural and historic barriers. Grantees can deliver these services internally or leverage partnerships to do so. When assisting Returning Residents Program participants who are released before completing their training, coordinate closely with Energy Transition Navigators, Workforce Hubs, and Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program grantees to confirm Service Needs Assessments and ensure delivery of all necessary wrap-around services.

If partnerships are leveraged, grantees should identify partners with culturally responsive organizations. For example, when providing English Language Learner services, match participants with mentors who have shared experiences. Apply equity values when considering partnerships so they understand the spirit of CEJA. Keep in mind that actual *delivery* of these services will not begin until after a returning resident has been released from the respective program facility.

Two weeks before release, the Returning Residents Program grantee should use the Service Needs Assessment first completed during intake to re-assess the need for wrap-around support following release. Whereas certain wrap-around service questions did not apply during intake, these areas (transportation, childcare, healthcare, housing, and technology) become applicable just prior to release. Wrap-around support services are available to:

1. **Returning Residents Program individual who completes after they are released** to provide support as they gain and maintain employment. Returning Residents grantees may offer these services directly or identify partner organizations to deliver these services.
2. Returning Residents Program participant who continue their training on the outside through a CEJA Workforce Hub or Climate Works Center. In this case, the CEJA Workforce Hub or Climate Works Center is responsible for providing the wrap-around services following release.

Wrap-around services may include the following:

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Transportation Costs

A significant barrier to accessing employment or training is **transportation**.

- Allowable Costs: Public transit fare/cards, car repairs, gas cards, plate sticker/city sticker renewal fees, insurance fees, rideshares, or taxis (Lyft and Uber, among others, when other options are unavailable).
- Non-allowable costs: Car lease or purchase.
- Guiding Question(s): Do you have reliable transportation to and from further or continued training, applicable transition services, and career opportunities? If yes, what is your primary form of transportation?

Identification and Driver's Education Fees

A **state ID or driver's license** will likely be required for employment, additional training services, or apprenticeship programs. Many people who are released from IDOC do not have a state ID or the documents needed to get one. Program grantees should support participants in getting a state ID or driver's license while in prison or after release.

Many clean energy jobs and apprenticeship programs require a driver's license. Some returning residents may have their license suspended or revoked. They may need help getting their license back and paying licensing fees. If participants need to complete a driver's education program, grantees may pay the required fees for driver's education and/or to obtain a license/identification card.

- Allowable Costs: Identification document costs (birth certificate, Social Security Card), State ID or Driver's license costs, driver's education lessons
- Non-allowable costs: Tickets and fines (e.g., vehicle impoundment)
- Guiding Questions: Do you have your birth certificate and social security card? Do you need help getting a State ID or Driver's License? Do you need help with driver's education costs?

Childcare/Family Member Care

Caregiving for a child or a family member can be a major barrier to gaining employment following release. CEJA allows for partial or total care costs. However, programs should also attempt to leverage alternate resources to help cover these costs.

- Allowable Costs: Childcare/babysitting costs, home aide costs.
- Guiding Question(s): Do family members depend on your care? If yes, will you need assistance with your family member's support/care while transitioning from the program or continuing your training?

Healthcare

Physical and mental health challenges can be a major barrier to finding and retaining employment or completing training. Partial or total healthcare costs are allowed after participants are released. However, programs should also attempt to leverage alternate resources to help cover these costs.

Drug testing is a requirement of the CEJA Returning Residents Program, and participants must also be aware that drug testing is required by many employers. In addition, substance use issues may be a barrier to finding and retaining employment. Supportive Services staff must ask if participants need

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services to address drug or substance use concerns so that they can pass drug tests and continue their training or successfully transition to a job or apprenticeship program.

- Allowable Costs: Doctor visits, medical care, alcohol and substance use counseling and treatment, mental health counseling, trauma counseling, dental care, and vision care.
- Guiding Questions: Are there any physical or mental health needs you need help addressing to continue your training or transition to a clean energy career? Are you able to pass the drug tests required by many employers and apprenticeship programs? Would you like to receive support to address your substance use?

Housing

Some participants may struggle to find or maintain **stable housing**, which can be a major barrier to finding and maintaining employment or continuing their training. It can impact their access to reliable transportation, their physical and mental health, and access to food and the internet. While housing costs are allowed under the Returning Residents Program, grantees should also attempt to leverage alternate resources to help cover these costs.

- Allowable Costs: Rent, deposits for rent, emergency housing costs, mortgage/tax/insurance payments, emergency home repairs to maintain habitability, storage of personal effects in case of eviction, and utilities.

Note: *participants may need assistance understanding some of these complex topics. See Financial Literacy below and the training module in Chapter 7.*

- Guiding Question: Do you need support maintaining stable housing in this program?

Financial Literacy

The ability to manage money competently is a skill that can have a positive lifelong impact on students and help them far beyond the program. **Financial literacy** courses teach participants the basics of personal finance mechanisms such as budgeting, saving, debt, and investing. These courses may also cover items such as explanations of pensions, retirement funds, and fringe benefits, among others.

- Allowable Costs: Course materials (handouts, workbooks, etc.), course/class fees, and financial literacy online course fees.
- Guiding Question: Do you feel confident managing your finances, including budgeting, saving, investing, or debt management? Would you like support with managing your cash flow?

Nutritional Assistance

Hunger is a major barrier to gaining or retaining employment or continuing training. Hungry people are not in a position to learn. Some programs may maintain a food pantry, and others may choose to provide funds to help participants purchase groceries.

- Allowable Costs: Groceries and gift cards to grocery stores.
- Guiding Questions: Do you need assistance buying food to successfully transition from this program? Are you interested in applying for SNAP?

Note: *Residents can apply for SNAP, Medicaid, and their identification documents while incarcerated.*

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Legal Assistance

Some participants may require **legal services** to clear the way for their placement into a job, advanced training, or a Registered Apprenticeship Program. Under the CEJA Returning Residents Program, partial or total funding of legal services necessary to complete the program and be placed into a clean energy job is allowed.

- Allowable Costs: Costs associated with expunging or sealing records, obtaining or reinstating revoked or suspended driver's licenses, untangling outside court debt issues, assistance with child support orders, certificates of rehabilitation, assistance preventing illegal evictions, resolving credit report problems, filing for domestic abuse restraining orders, assisting veterans with accessing healthcare, education grants, and housing services. It is important that participants know their rights regarding expungement or sealed records. Cost for this is allowable.
- Guiding Question: Would you like to receive legal assistance services like help sealing or expunging your record?

Technology Assistance (Broadband and Hardware)

Access to technology and technology literacy is important for finding and retaining employment or continuing training on the outside. If program participants do not have technology needed to communicate with employers and apply for jobs, the grantee may utilize funding to assist the participant. It is **recommended** that organizations attempt to enroll participants in existing broadband and technology assistance programs before directly paying for or purchasing goods and services.

Note: *The primary need may be for phones to communicate with prospective employers.*

Note: *Efforts to enroll participants in existing broadband and technology assistance programs can be documented as a part of the participant's case notes.*

- Allowable Costs: Broadband/hot spot fees, cell phone and data plan payments, equipment such as modems or routers to establish an in-home internet connection, purchase of smartphones and laptops for lending to participants.
- Guiding Questions: Do you have a smart phone? Do you have a reliable phone service plan? Do you have reliable access to the internet? (If continuing training) Do you have a computer that will allow you to access lessons, including online instruction and videos? Do you feel confident using technology, including calling, texting, emailing, navigating the internet, and completing basic tasks on a smartphone or computer?

Accommodations

Grantees have an ethical and legal responsibility to comply with the **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**. They must make reasonable accommodations to provide access to the program and facilitate the participant's learning. All buildings where training is provided must be ADA-accessible. Additional accommodations may have costs associated with them, while others may not. Staff may be able to provide some services but may need to hire or make referrals to others. The important thing to remember is that reasonable accommodations must be made to provide access to all eligible participants.

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- Allowable costs: Screen reader assistance, sign language interpreters, assistive listening devices.
- Guiding Question: Do you need accommodations such as a screen reader, assistive listening device, or sign language interpreter to participate in training?

Note: The Illinois Department of Corrections does not discriminate against individuals in Custody with known disabilities and provides reasonable accommodations to ensure access to programs, activities, and services in accordance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the provisions established. For more details regarding IDOC accommodations, please see the [401111 - ADA - Accommodations.pdf](#) Grantees must partner with each respective Facility ADA Coordinator to develop a plan to respond to participants' ADA needs.

Other Wrap-around Support Services

There may be necessary and reasonable costs to support participants beyond the current identified services. These services can be fulfilled through referrals, leveraged resources, or, in some cases, CEJA Returning Residents Program funding. **If the grantee wants to allocate CEJA Returning Residents Program funding for additional services not described in the Service Needs Assessment, the support service must first be submitted to the grantee's assigned Grant Manager for approval. Only after approval can the grantee add the service to the CEJA Reporting System and provide the service to the participant.**

- Guiding Question: Are there additional supports needed to ensure your transition from the CEJA Returning Residents Program or transfer to another CEJA program?

Wrap-around Service Examples

To assist grantees with responding to wrap-around service needs, multiple wrap-around support service examples are provided. Use the following tables to identify **potential gaps** in services and to **strategize** about how to fill those gaps.

Table 8.2 provides examples of how grantees can assist participants in overcoming barriers. These wrap-around service needs may be delivered internally by grantees or through referrals and have allowable costs associated with each barrier.

Table 8.2: Participant Barrier Examples and Allowable Costs

Examples of Barriers	Participant Challenge	Allowable Costs to Assist in Overcoming Barriers
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Financial challenges	It may be difficult to stay financially solvent after release and while finding employment. They may need help with expenses while they are just getting started.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apprenticeship application fees • Housing costs like rent and utilities • Transportation costs • Phone costs • Financial literacy course fees
Childcare/Family Member Care Needs	Some parents may face challenges obtaining \childcare.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Childcare/family member care fees
No Driver’s License and/or No Reliable Transportation	Many jobs in the clean energy trades require reliable personal transportation, as travel to different job sites is common.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driver’s education fees • Public transit fare/cards • Car repairs • Gas cards • Plate sticker/city sticker renewal fees

Often, grantees must **leverage partnerships** with other organizations to best serve participants and ensure they have an equitable opportunity to complete training and transition to employment. The table below suggests partners that grantees can engage to assist participants with challenges requiring additional support.

Table 8.3: Other Participant Barriers and Potential Partners

Examples of Barriers	Participant Challenge	Potential Partners
Physical Health	Self-reported or family health issues may limit the ability to complete training and obtain/maintain employment.	Local/county health center/department
Substance Use	Participants may have a substance use disorder that interferes with their ability to gain or retain employment. They may be unable to pass a required drug test for employment.	Local behavioral health centers & organizations, community mental health centers & organizations
Mental Health	Mental health conditions such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, and others can make it difficult to find and maintain employment.	Local behavioral health centers & organizations, community mental health centers & organizations

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Domestic Violence	Participants who are experiencing domestic violence may find it more difficult to attend or complete training programs and obtain/maintain employment.	Domestic violence service providers, Department of Health & Human Services
Housing Instability / Homelessness	Some participants may face difficulties finding permanent housing or are homeless.	Public housing authorities, Community Action Agencies
Public Assistance (e.g., TANF or SNAP)	Some participants might have difficulty meeting their basic needs or be experiencing hunger, which makes it difficult to find and maintain employment. They may worry about losing benefits if they make too much money.	Department of Health & Human Services, Community Action Agencies

In addition to the barriers in Table 8.3, some populations may experience **specific challenges** or a combination of challenges that require the provision of a broad spectrum of services by a broad spectrum of partners (see the table below). They must be provided with resources, referrals, and information about programs and agencies that can assist them in addressing their specific barriers.

Note: For more information on developing partnerships, see Chapter 4: Partnerships.

Table 8.4: Barriers for specific groups/populations

Population	Challenge for Special Population	Potential Partners
Youth (under 18)	Homeless youth may have experienced trauma before and after becoming homeless; they may have been involved with the child welfare or juvenile system, experienced family conflict, racial disparities, and/or mental health or substance abuse disorders.	Department of Health & Human Services, local behavioral health center & organizations
Returning Residents	When transitioning from prison, returning residents may find it difficult to reintegrate into their communities; they may also face challenges such as social stigma, lack of job readiness, lack of an ID, financial instability, and housing insecurity.	Department of Health & Human Services, public housing authorities, reentry organizations, Community Action Agencies
Immigrants	Immigrants may experience language and cultural barriers as they develop English proficiency and adapt to a new culture.	Department of Health & Human Services, Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR), translation services

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Veterans	As a result of experiences in combat situations, many military veterans have Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), which can sometimes lead to other challenges like homelessness and substance abuse disorders.	Veteran’s Administration, local behavioral health center & organizations
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Grantees must continue to provide comprehensive wrap-around services after release during the transition and follow-up period (a minimum of 12 months, to be extended at the discretion of the program administrator) to help facilitate effective transitions into jobs or advanced training opportunities.

Wrap-around services become necessary during the application or job search period, after Returning Residents Program participants complete their training or seek a transfer to another CEJA program. These may continue for the first few months after they have received a job, before they are able to cover the costs themselves. As much as possible, programs should coordinate services within their local community. Wrap-around services that support student needs (such as mentoring or tutoring) must also be made available during the transition and follow-up period, particularly if there is a long waiting period between completion of training and the next opportunity.

Connecting to Employers through the Energy Workforce Equity Portal

Grantees are **required** to help participants register as an Equity Eligible Person in the **Illinois Power Agency’s [Energy Workforce Equity Portal](#)** at the time of release or directly after release.

The Illinois Power Agency’s Energy Workforce Equity Portal is an online resource designed to help connect clean energy companies with equity investment eligible persons looking to work in the clean energy sector in Illinois. Many clean energy companies have minimum equity standards that require them to hire a certain percentage of equity investment eligible persons. Participants of the CEJA Workforce Programs qualify as equity investment eligible persons. Making these connections is a key aspect of ensuring that the clean energy industry in Illinois grows in an equitable manner. The portal also provides a clean energy job listing dashboard where participants and transition staff can search for jobs.

Once they are released, Returning Residents Program participants 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 Illinois Shines or Solar for All, 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, participants may be matched with contractors and apprenticeship programs based on geography and trade needs.

To Register as an Equity Eligible Person, go to the [Job Seekers page](#) on the portal. Click on “Register as an Equity Eligible Person.” Grantees can fill out the form on behalf of their participants (with their permission) or help them fill out the form themselves.

To register, participants will need the following information:

- Basic contact information including phone number and email address

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- Available shifts (if applicable)
- Training program information
- Completion date
- Skills and certifications received
- Region(s) available to work

The form also asks participants to complete an Equity Eligible Person attestation form. The attestation form requires a certificate of completion from the CEJA program or written communication from the training program administrator confirming participation. Participants can also attach a resume.

Note: For more information about how to navigate this system, refer to the Energy Workforce Equity Portal, <https://energyequity.illinois.gov/>.

Participant Outcomes

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

Primary Outcome participants are placed in a clean energy job or advanced training program following the successful completion of the training program. They may include:

- Participants who attain a job in the clean energy industry.*
- Participants who are placed in a Registered Apprenticeship Program in the construction and building trades.
- Participants who are released from IDOC facilities and co-enroll in another CEJA training program.
- Participants who enroll in an advanced training program related to clean energy.
- Participants who open a small business related to clean energy.

Secondary Outcomes - Participants who receive a job or enroll in a training program outside the clean energy industry following the successful completion of the training program.

- Participants who attain training-related employment outside of the clean energy industry.
- Participants who are placed in a Registered Apprenticeship Program outside of the construction and building trades.
- Participants who enroll in an advanced training program unrelated to clean energy.

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***Defining clean energy jobs.** CEJA’s definition of “clean energy jobs” includes jobs in the solar energy, wind energy, energy efficiency, energy storage, solar thermal, green hydrogen, geothermal, electric vehicle industries, other renewable energy industries, industries achieving emission reductions, and other related sectors including related industries that manufacture, develop, build, maintain, or provide ancillary services to renewable energy resources or energy efficiency products or services, including the manufacture and installation of healthier building materials that contain fewer hazardous chemicals. Clean energy jobs also include administrative, sales, other support functions within these industries, and other related sector industries.

Many clean energy jobs are not focused exclusively on activities related to clean energy (e.g., an electrician may only spend a portion of their time working on solar projects). Clean energy jobs include those where a portion of the time or a majority of the time is spent on activities related to clean energy.

Exit With 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.

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 new hires may be most vulnerable to leaving the industry.

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

Note: *Follow-up must occur over the course of, at minimum, a period of 12 months, to be extended at the discretion of the program administrator.*

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 training program.

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

These follow-ups are also opportunities to provide encouragement, answer questions, and assess the need for additional services. Transition 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

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must embrace differences and remember that individual characteristics and challenges do not define a person's entire identity.

Follow-up services and activities after transition 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 8.5: 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 employment 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 experienced worker to assist with workplace issues.
Career Advancement Services	Services that provide individuals who complete 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 individual's local geographic areas. This may include career awareness, career counseling, and career exploration services, among others.
Opening a Business Assistance Referral	Referral to a Small Business Development Center, CEJA Contractor Incubator, or other centers.

Long-term Follow-up

Beyond the first year of active tracking, CEJA Workforce Programs will employ a **longitudinal study** to track employment and outcomes every year for up to ten years after leaving the program. This longitudinal study is essential in determining the effectiveness of the CEJA Returning Residents Program and its 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 CEJA Returning Residents Program Partner Guide for:

- Exit Interview Questionnaire
- Pre-Transition Career Assessment and Plan
- Sample follow-up questions
- Sample Dismissal Letter