



Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program

2024-25 Program Manual

Chapter 3: 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 equity investment-eligible communities and other targeted populations.
- 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.

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 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/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 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.
- 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 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.

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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](#).

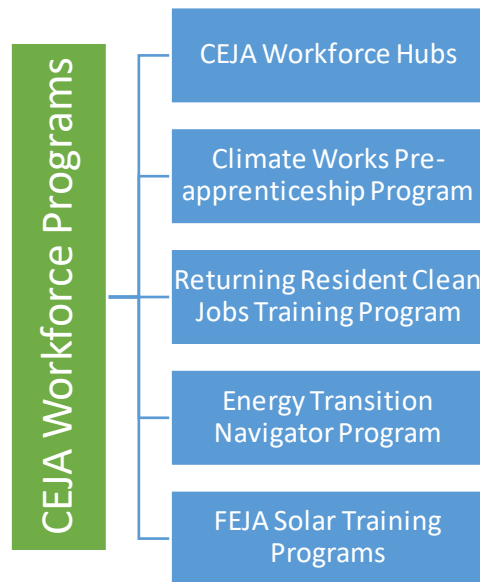
Table 1: Partnership and Provider Relationship Requirements

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
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.**

CEJA Workforce Partners

The CEJA Workforce Hubs Program is part of the larger **CEJA Workforce Program ecosystem**, shown below. Grantees will, therefore, need to coordinate closely with the grantees of these programs to build the clean energy workforce in Illinois. Consider how partnerships with each of these might support the program's success. 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.



Energy Transition Navigators

Your central CEJA partnership will be with the Energy Transition Navigators. Energy Transition Navigators will provide outreach, education, and recruitment to equity investment-eligible communities and individuals to increase participation in the CEJA workforce programs, including the CEJA Workforce Hubs. Energy Transition Navigators will provide support and career guidance for participants enrolling in your program. You must work with them to coordinate your outreach and recruitment efforts.

Climate Works Program

This program provides pre-apprenticeship in the construction and building trades in three large regions in the state of Illinois. The program will prepare participants for successful entry into a construction and building trade apprenticeship. CEJA Workforce Hub grantees may partner with Climate Works grantees to host outreach events, coordinate learning opportunities, provide job fairs, or share outreach contact referrals.

Returning Resident Clean Jobs Training Program

Grantees may receive referrals for additional training or barrier reduction services for individuals who participated in clean jobs training in correctional facilities. Coordinate with the grantees of this program to support returning resident participants.

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
- 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

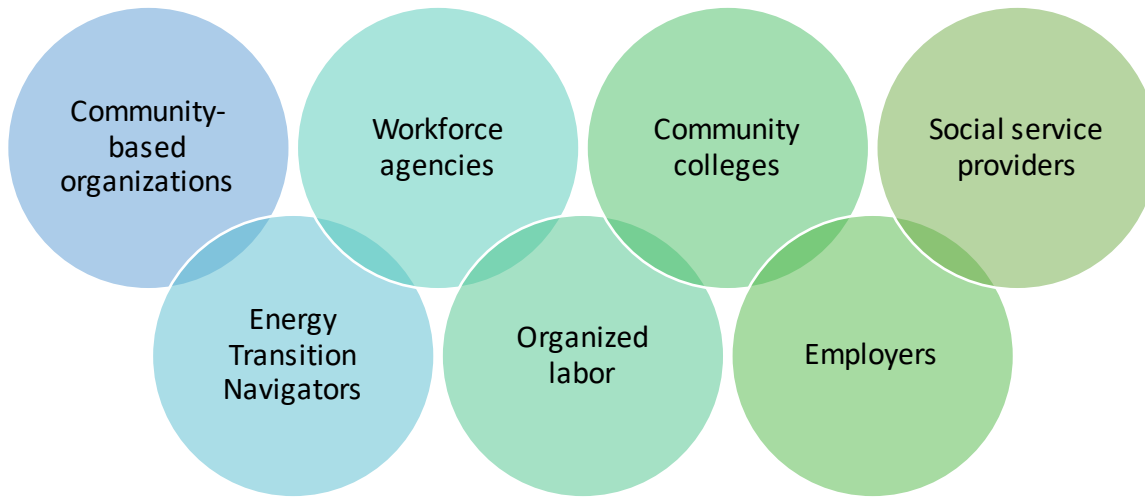
Each of these are critical for removing barriers and providing participants with the support they need to be successful.

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 the CEJA 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, equity goals, and overall equity focus, see Chapter 2 Equity & Program Culture.

Developing Partnerships

The success of the CEJA Workforce Hubs Program depends on grantees' ability to **develop partnerships** with external organizations, such as organized labor, employers, community-based organizations, and workforce agencies for job placement, support 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.

Outreach and recruitment: What organizations might help with outreach and recruitment? To recruit participants, consider developing relationships with high school counselors, faith-based organizations, 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).

Connect with 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

Support service delivery: CEJA Workforce Hubs offer a wide variety of support services. Still, it is unlikely that one program will be able to provide all the barrier reduction services in-house. Leveraging formal and informal partnerships with other service providers can help meet the needs of program participants. Referrals to other organizations will be more effective if relationships are developed beforehand. Reach out to organizations that provide food, housing, transportation assistance, legal assistance, mental health services, substance use treatment, childcare, and more. Determine how warm hand-offs will be facilitated, services will be paid for, and service delivery can be supported.

Training program delivery: Work-based learning is a required and crucial element of the CEJA Workforce Hubs curriculum. If partnerships do not currently exist with employers or other organizations for work-based learning, developing these relationships must be a priority. Explore how employers or apprenticeship programs might provide:

- Job site practicums so your participants can have hands-on experience at a real job site.

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- Job shadowing or field trips so that participants can see workers in action.
- Class visits so that participants can ask questions about employment.

Additionally, consider developing relationships with external education providers for tutoring or other student support services for participants with special needs.

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.

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, electric vehicle charging station installers (or maintainers), and distributed generation installers. Search for companies [here](#).
- [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)
- Contact your 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](#).

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 your program, employers can:

- Access qualified candidates with fundamental clean energy knowledge, clean energy skills, and essential employability skills.

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- Meet minimum equity and supplier diversity requirements for participation in state solar, wind, and energy efficiency programs.
- Make good on 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, we strongly recommend 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.
- 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 can be found in the CEJA Workforce Hubs 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 Workforce Hubs Partner Guide. Tracking partner relationships will also enable you to share contacts with other CEJA grantees, such as the Energy Transition Navigators, to coordinate engagement efforts 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 CEJA 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 Hubs 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).

- **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 Workforce Hubs 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 Workforce Hubs Partner Guide for a sample Memorandum of Understanding.