

Finance Fridays Webinar Series –
Episode 9

Equitable Energy Future Grant Program



October 17, 2025



*The Building Energy Hub is a
project of Illinois Green Alliance*

The Goals of the Hub are to:

- Educate & train building professionals
- Support diverse contractors
- Connect contractors to a project pipeline
- Build capacity for advanced codes and policies
- Streamline access to financial resources

The Hub is growing capacity for commercial & multi-family building retrofits.





Items of Note

1. This session is being recorded
2. The recording and this slide deck will be made available in a follow-up email.
3. Please remain muted throughout the session and add questions in the Q&A. The questions will be answered at the end.

Today's Presenter



Aaron McEvoy

Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) Grants Manager
Office of Energy and Business Utility
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity



Equitable Energy Future Grant Program & more

Aaron McEvoy, Grant Manager
DCEO Office of Energy & Business Utility
17 October 2025



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

Overview & Objectives

1. CEJA
2. CEJA Ecosystem
3. DCEO CEJA Programs
4. Office of Energy & Business Utility Grant Programs
5. Equitable Energy Futures Grant
6. DCEO Grant Process
7. Building Your Capital Stack (in brief)
8. Q&A



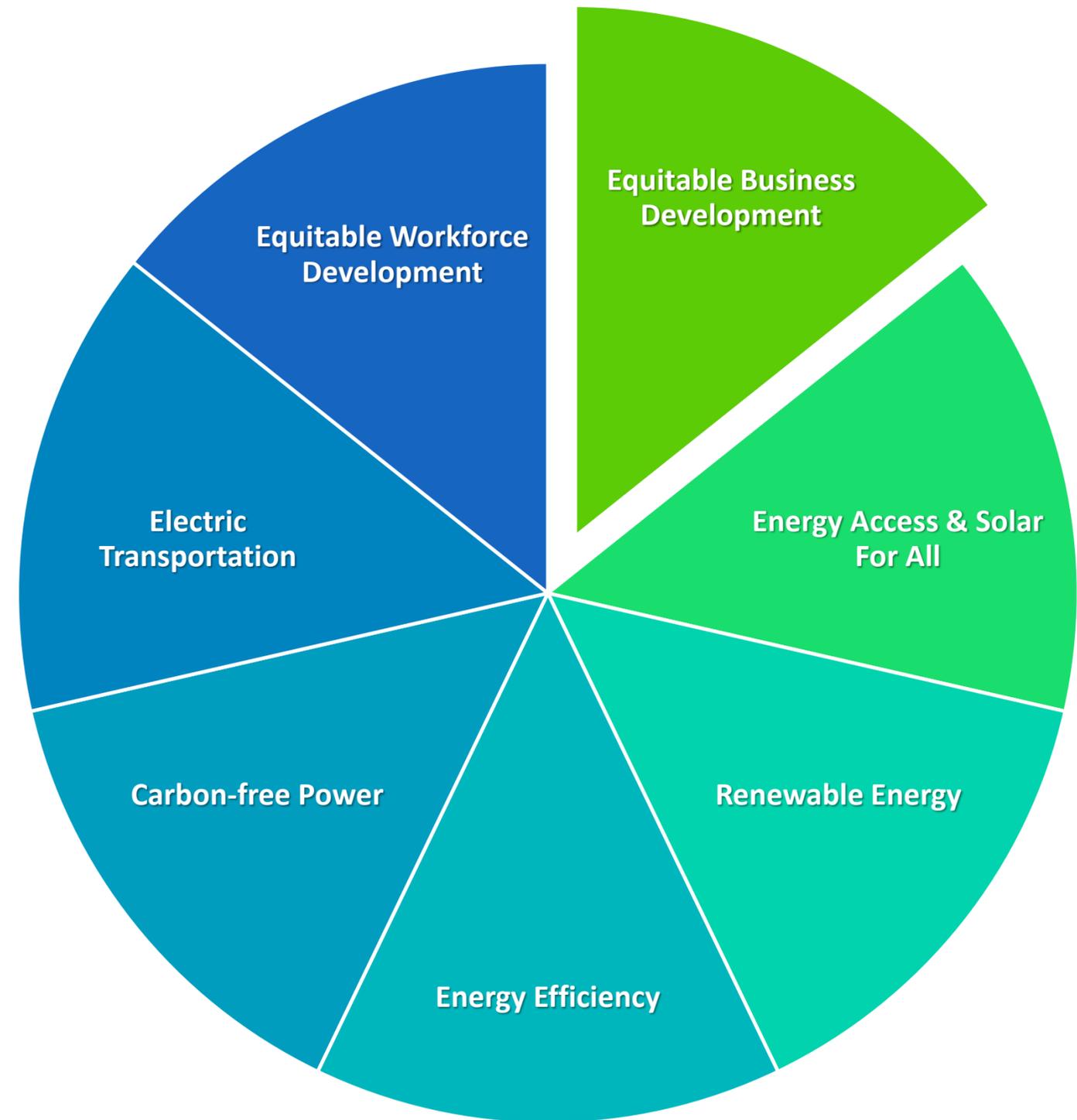


Climate & Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA)

What is the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) ?

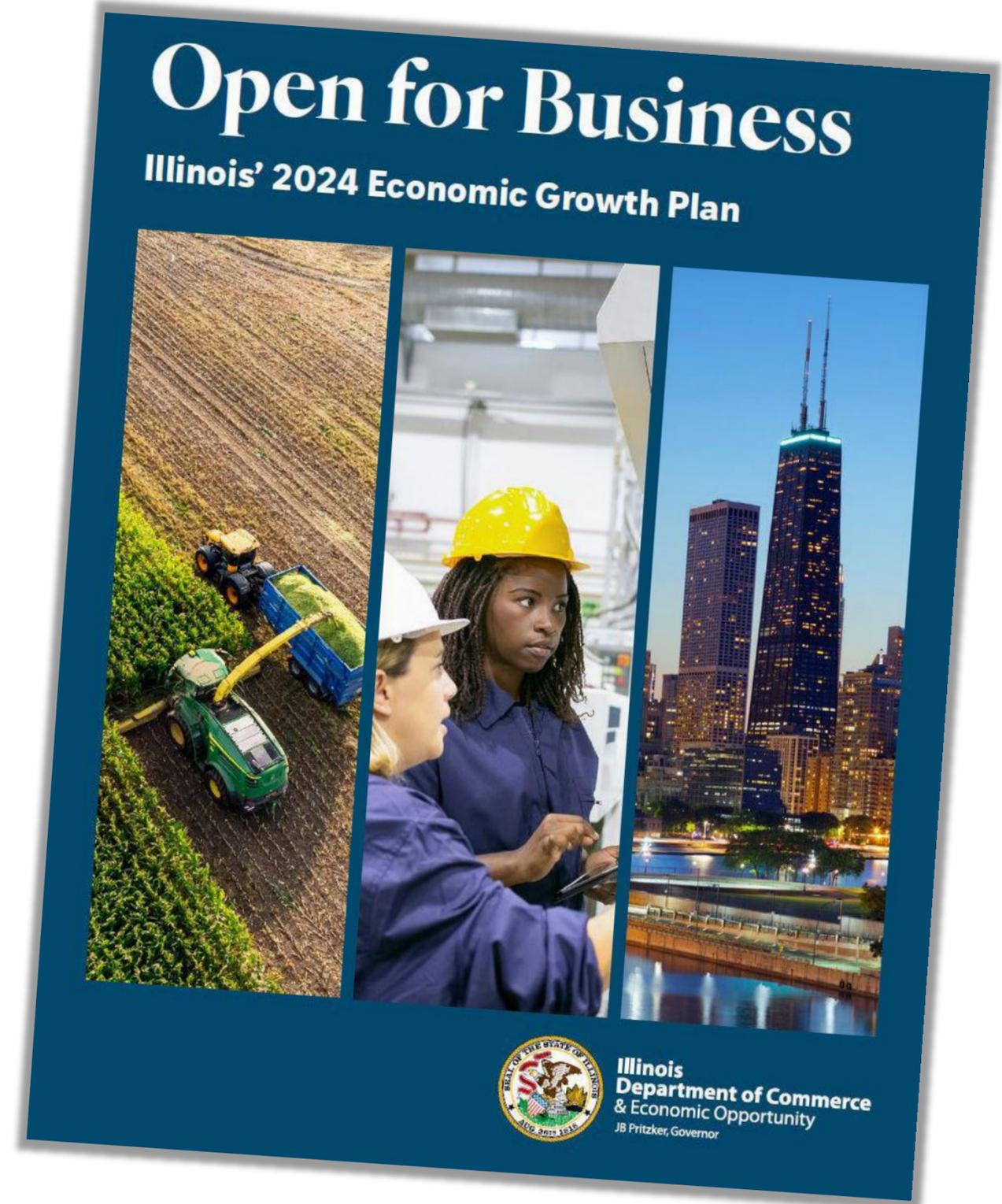
Comprehensive energy legislation that centers equity and puts Illinois on track to achieve 100 % clean energy by 2050.

Twelve state agencies are responsible for implementing CEJA.

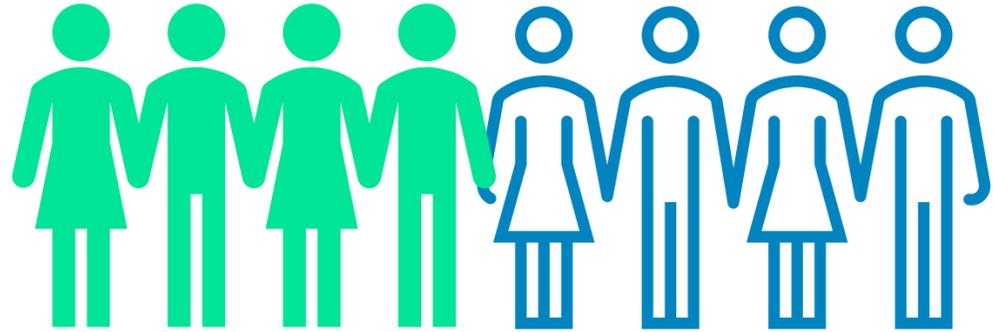


Open for Business: Illinois' 2024 Economic Growth Plan

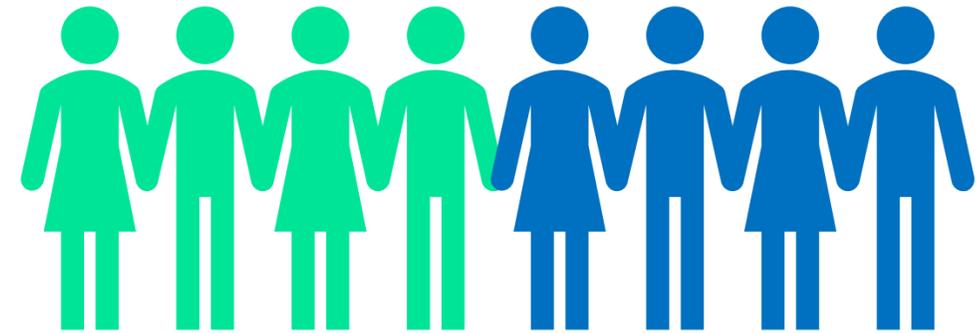
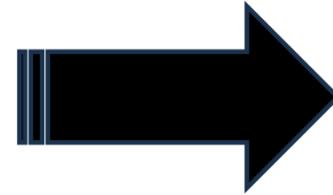
- CEJA legislation and Equitable Energy Future addresses 3 of 4 economic development goals
 - Advance Comprehensive Economic Development
 - Promote Equitable Growth by Empowering Workers, Entrepreneurs, and Communities
 - Build Out the New Clean Energy Economy
- Equity Focused



CEJA Equity Focus



Some groups of people and communities benefit more from clean energy investments while some others suffer more from environmental impacts & community disinvestment.



The benefits of clean energy investments and good-paying clean energy jobs should be distributed equitably.



How Can CEJA Help My Community?

- Community takes leadership role in clean energy transition
- Energy transition will bring
 - Economic opportunity
 - Economic growth
 - Job opportunities
 - Better environmental outcomes
 - Better health outcomes
- Can expand economic development efforts
- Clean energy jobs make communities more resilient, combat climate change

How Can CEJA Help My Organization?

- Provide stable funding
- Build capacity
 - Hiring staff
 - Professional development
 - Build new network of partners and providers
- Flexible funding source
- State Funds which can be leveraged with other non-CEJA programs



How Can CEJA Help Employers?

- Access qualified candidates with fundamental clean energy knowledge and skills and essential employability skills.
- Meet minimum equity or supplier diversity requirements
- Grow their businesses to take advantage of clean energy project funding.
- Provide capital for renewable and energy efficiency projects



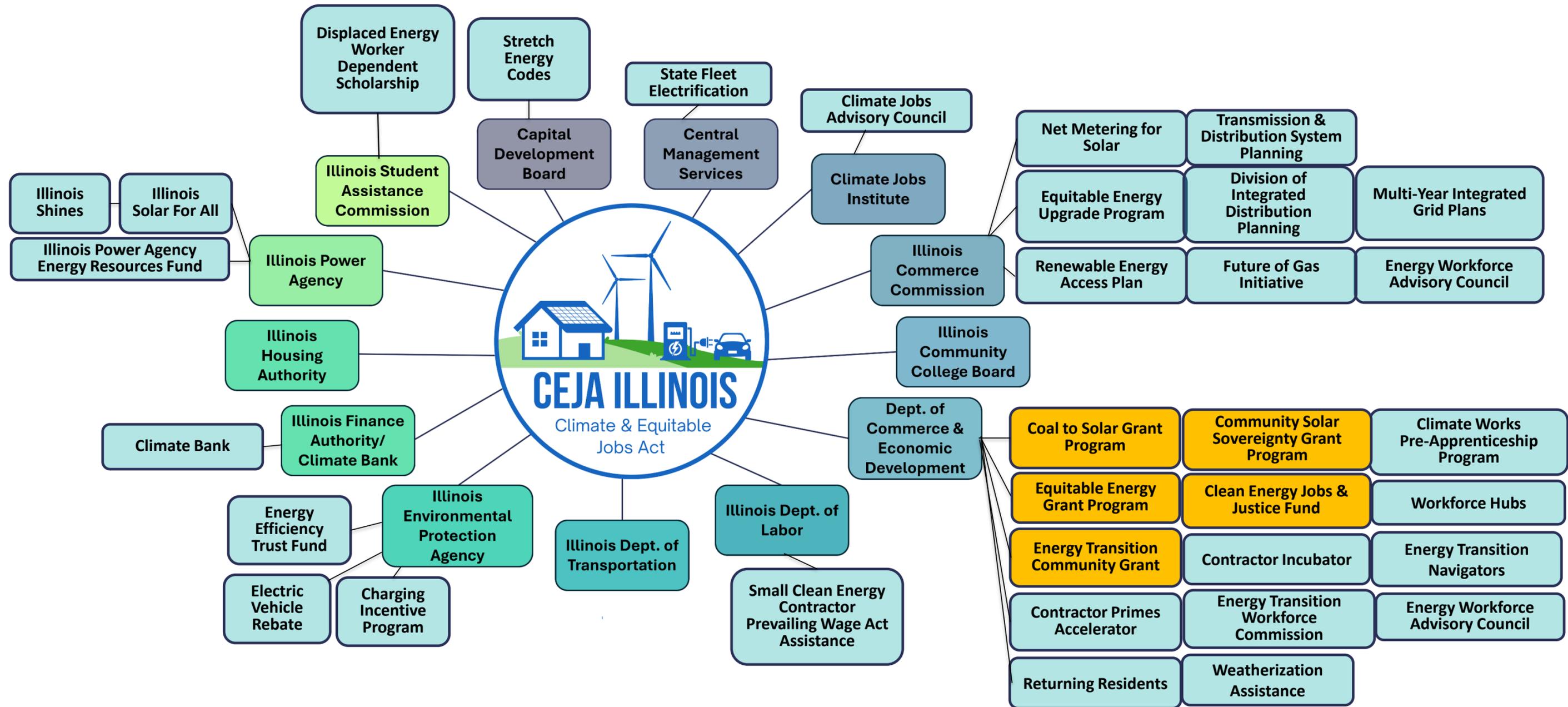


CEJA Ecosystem

CEJA Ecosystem

CEJA

OEBU

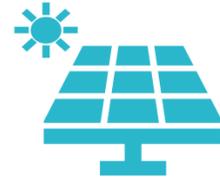


*A comprehensive Clean Energy Ecosystem documenting all CEJA and clean energy programs in Illinois is available upon request

DCEO Clean Energy Programs

CEJA Economic & Community Development (\$74M)

Office of Energy & Business Utility (OEBU)



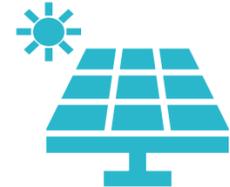
Coal to Solar



Energy Transition
Community Grant
\$40M/yr.



Equitable Energy
Future Grant
Up to \$25.5M/yr.



Solar Energy
Sovereignty Grant
Up to \$8.5M/yr.

CEJA Workforce Training Programs (\$61 M +)

Office of Employment & Training (OET)



Clean Jobs
Workforce Network
\$21M/yr.



Climate Works
Pre-apprenticeship
\$9M/yr.



Energy Transition
Navigators
\$6M/yr.



Returning Resident
Clean Jobs
\$6M/yr.



Energy Transition
Barrier Reduction
\$15M/yr.



Clean Energy Career
Pathway Program
\$4M

CEJA Councils & Boards

Office of Energy & Business Utility (OEBU)



Energy Workforce
Advisory Council



Clean Energy Jobs &
Justice Fund

CEJA Contractor Support Programs (\$30M+)

Office of Entrepreneurship & Innovation
Technology(OEIT)



Contractor
Incubator
\$21M/yr.



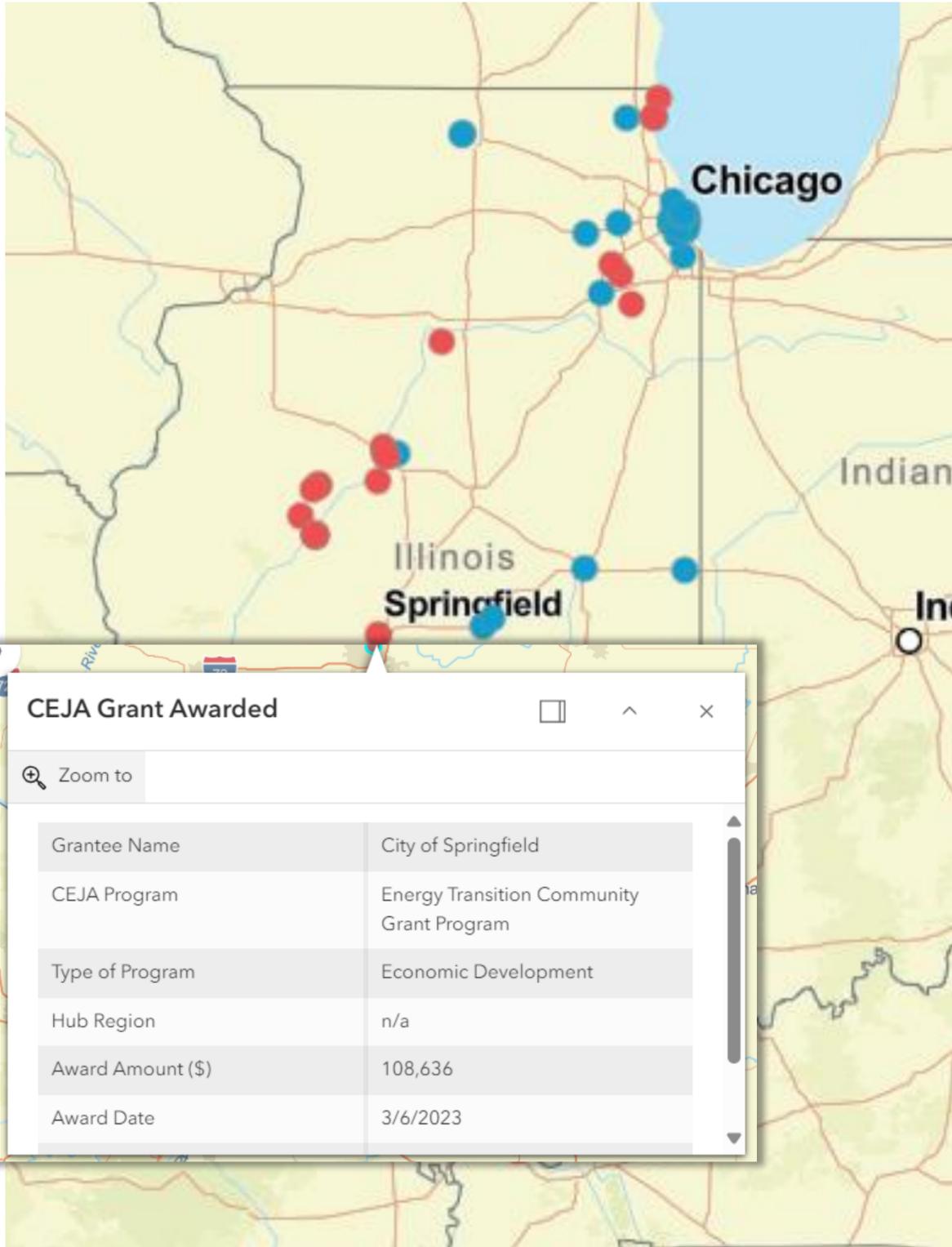
Contractor
Primes Accelerator
\$9M/yr.

Future Energy Jobs Act (FEJA)

OET



FEJA Workforce
Training Program



DCEO CEJA Map

Select any of the blue or red dots to access information about each DCEO CEJA grantee.

- Workforce/Contractor Development Programs
- Economic/Community Development Programs

This resource can help identify workforce or potential partners in each region.

DCEO CEJA Map: dceo.illinois.gov/ceja/map

CEJA Workforce Programs

Clean Jobs Workforce Network Programs

Provides training to prepare people for entry level clean energy jobs located in 14 regional hubs across Illinois (Kankakee beginning in 2025)

Energy Transition Navigator Program

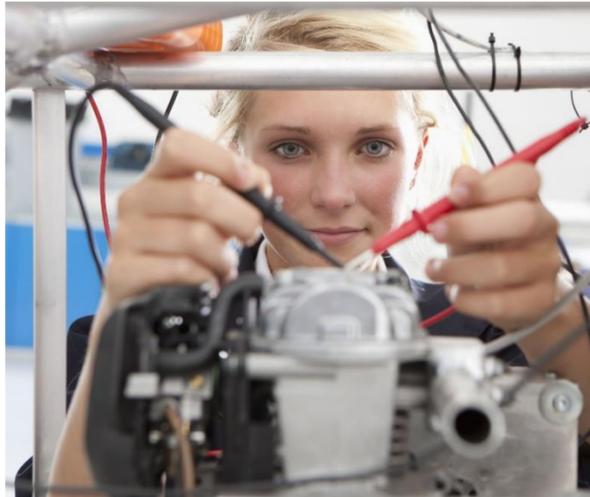
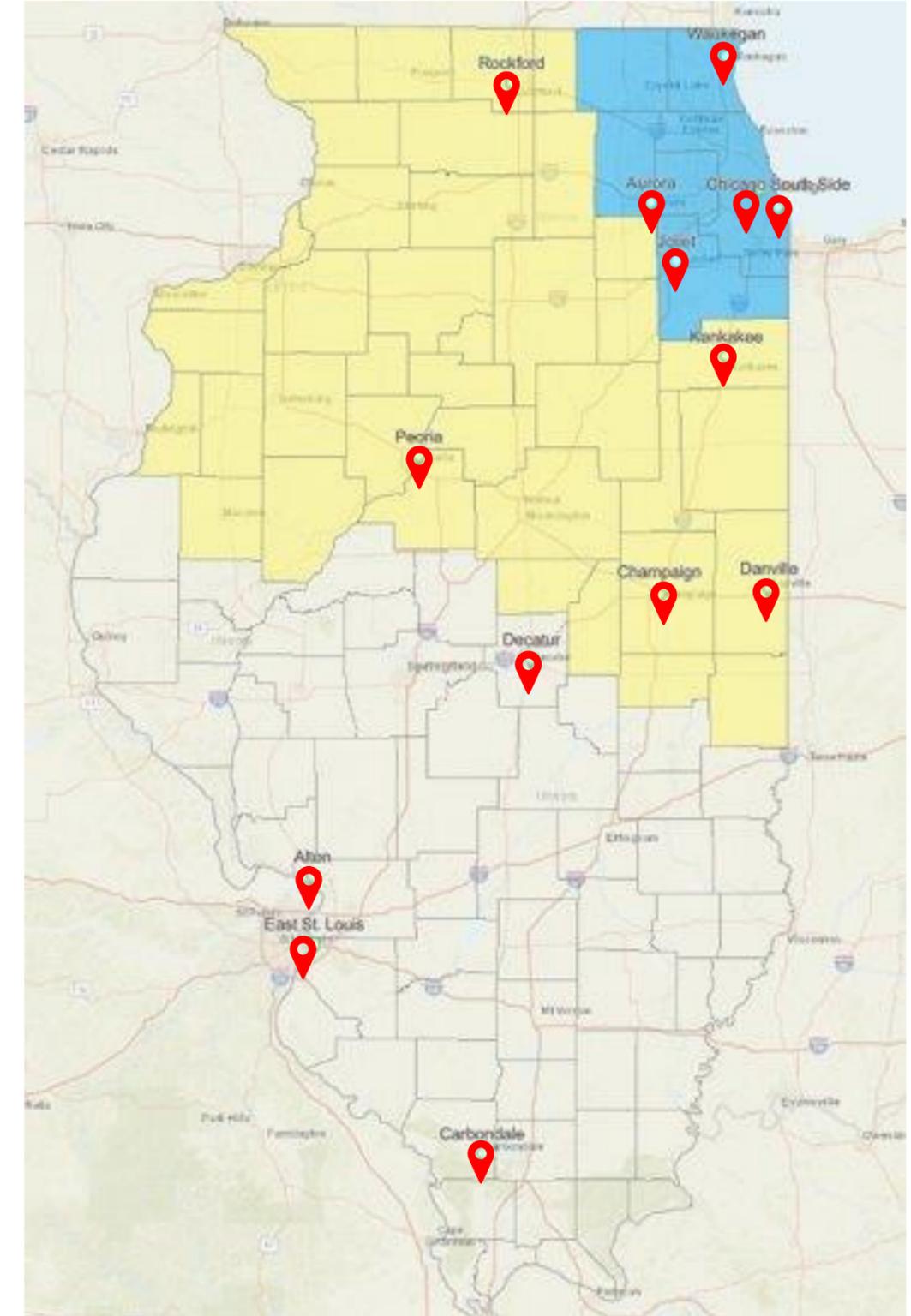
This program acts as the recruiting arm for the Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program and the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program.

Climate Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Provides training to prepare people for Department of Labor Registered Apprenticeship Programs in the construction and building trades with an emphasis on clean energy.

Returning Residents

This program will provide training within Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC) correctional facilities to prepare people in custody for entry-level clean energy jobs.





CEJA Contractor Programs

Contractor Incubator Program

The Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program (“Contractor Incubator Program”) will provide eligible contractors with **access to low-cost capital, support for obtaining insurance, assistance registering to become vendors for state incentive programs, connections with firms hiring contractors and subcontractors, and other vital services.** Participating contractors will receive **training, mentoring and support** to build their businesses, connect to projects, compete for capital, and execute clean energy-related project installations and subcontracts.

\$21 million per year will be allocated for the program, subject to appropriation.

Applicants have been identified for: Chicago South Side, Chicago West/Southwest Sides, Rockford, Aurora, Joliet, Peoria, Decatur

Applications are under review for: Waukegan, Champaign, Danville, Carbondale, East St. Louis, Alton



CEJA Contractor Programs

Contractor Primes Accelerator Program

The Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program will provide **multi-year one-on-one coaching to assist contractor participants in developing 5-year business plans** and growing their businesses.

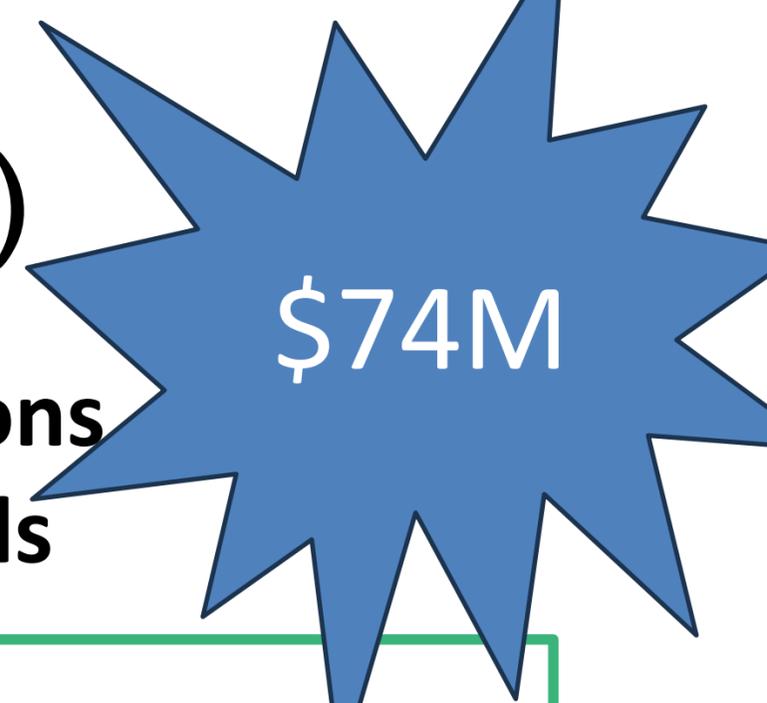
Participating contractors will also be eligible for **operational support grants** and will have **access to capital for upfront project costs and pre-development funding**.

Participants will receive **mentorship, assistance preparing bids and Request for Proposal** applications, assistance **connecting to state and federal programs**, and more.

\$9 million per year will be allocated for this program, subject to appropriation.

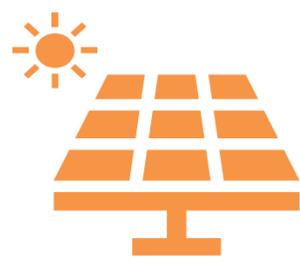
Applications are currently under review for North, Central, and Southern Regions

Office of Energy & Business Utility (OEBU)



Economic Development Jobs & Environmental Justice

Commissions & Councils



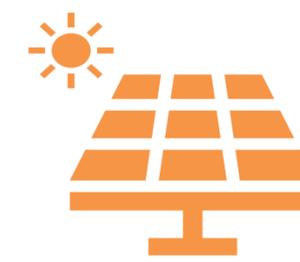
Coal to Solar



Energy Transition
Community Grant



Equitable Energy
Future Grant



Community Solar Energy
Sovereignty Grant



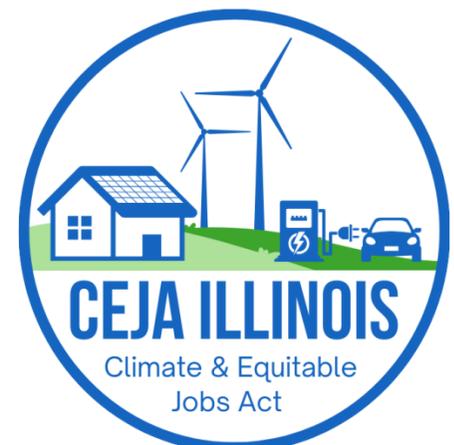
Energy Transition
Workforce
Commission



Energy Workforce
Advisory Council



Clean Energy Jobs &
Justice Fund





Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program (CSES)

CSES provides **\$8.5 million annually in pre-development funding to support activities related to community solar projects** and/or development of programs or entities to assist in the long-term governance, management, and maintenance of community solar projects.

Eligible Applicants:

- Community-based Organizations (CBOs)
- A public entity (if no CBO is the surrounding community has the ability/capacity)
- Technical service provider in partnership with a CBO

Grant funds can be utilized to fund an array of activities taking place during Phase 1: Planning and Feasibility and/or Phase 2: Pre-Development

Will re-open in 2025 and will accept applications until the funds have been exhausted or until the end of the calendar year.



Marketing & Outreach



Purchase/ Lease Land



Financing



Community Ownership Model Development



Staff & Operations



Site Identification & Assessments



Interconnection Costs



Permits, Zoning, Fixing Code Violations



Equipment & Supplies

Allowable costs include but are not limited to the items above.



Equitable Energy Future Grant Program



Equitable Energy Future Grant Program (EEF)

The Equitable Energy Future Grant (EEF) provides **\$25.5 million annually in pre-development funding** to eligible contractors to support the development of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects benefitting historically disadvantaged communities.

Eligible Applicants:

- Illinois Power Agency certified Equity Eligible Contractors
- Contractors that meet equity building criteria based on submitted CEJA Ecosystem Utilization Plan (CEUP).

Grant funds can be utilized to fund an array of activities taking place during Phase 1: Planning and Feasibility and/or Phase 2: Pre-Development

Open now and will accept applications until the funds have been exhausted or until the end of the calendar year.



Professional Services



Applications & Deposits



Purchase/Lease Land



Permits & Zoning



Interconnection Costs



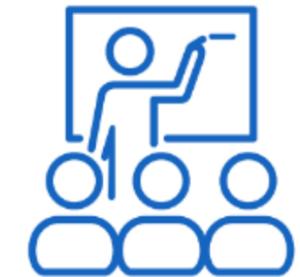
Equipment & Supplies



Marketing & Outreach



Staff & Operations



Workforce Development

Allowable costs include but are not limited to the items above.

NOFO Fundamentals: Equitable Energy Futures



Funding Background & Goal

The Equitable Energy Future Grant Program (EEF) is one of the two grants funded under the Jobs & Environmental Justice Grant Fund

EEF offers pre-development funding to support the development of renewable energy & energy efficiency projects.

The goal of EEF is to remove barriers to project, community & business development caused by lack of capital.



Eligible Applicants



Funding

NOFO Fundamentals: Equitable Energy Futures



Funding Purpose & Goal



Eligible Applicants



Funding

- **Equity Eligible Contractors**
Must be certified through the Illinois Power Agency's Equity Eligible Contractor program.
- **An Illinois business, non-profit, or cooperative organization that meets equity-building criteria.**

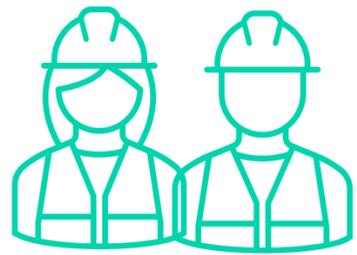
This determination is made at the time of application based on completion of the required CEJA Ecosystem Utilization Plan (CEUP)

Become an EEC: <https://illinoisshines.com/become-an-equity-eligible-contractor-ec-approved-vendor-or-designee/>

NOFO Fundamentals: Equitable Energy Futures



Funding Purpose & Goal



Eligible Applicants



Funding

Equity Eligible Contractors

At least 50% of ownership/partner/proprietor, board must meet one of the qualifications below:

1. Persons who graduated from or are current or former participants in a CEJA Workforce Development Program, the Solar Training Pipeline, or Multi-Cultural Jobs Program
2. Persons who are graduates of or currently enrolled in the foster care system
3. Persons who were formerly incarcerated
4. Persons whose primary residence is in an equity investment eligible community

NOFO Fundamentals: Equitable Energy Futures



Funding Purpose & Goal



Eligible Applicants

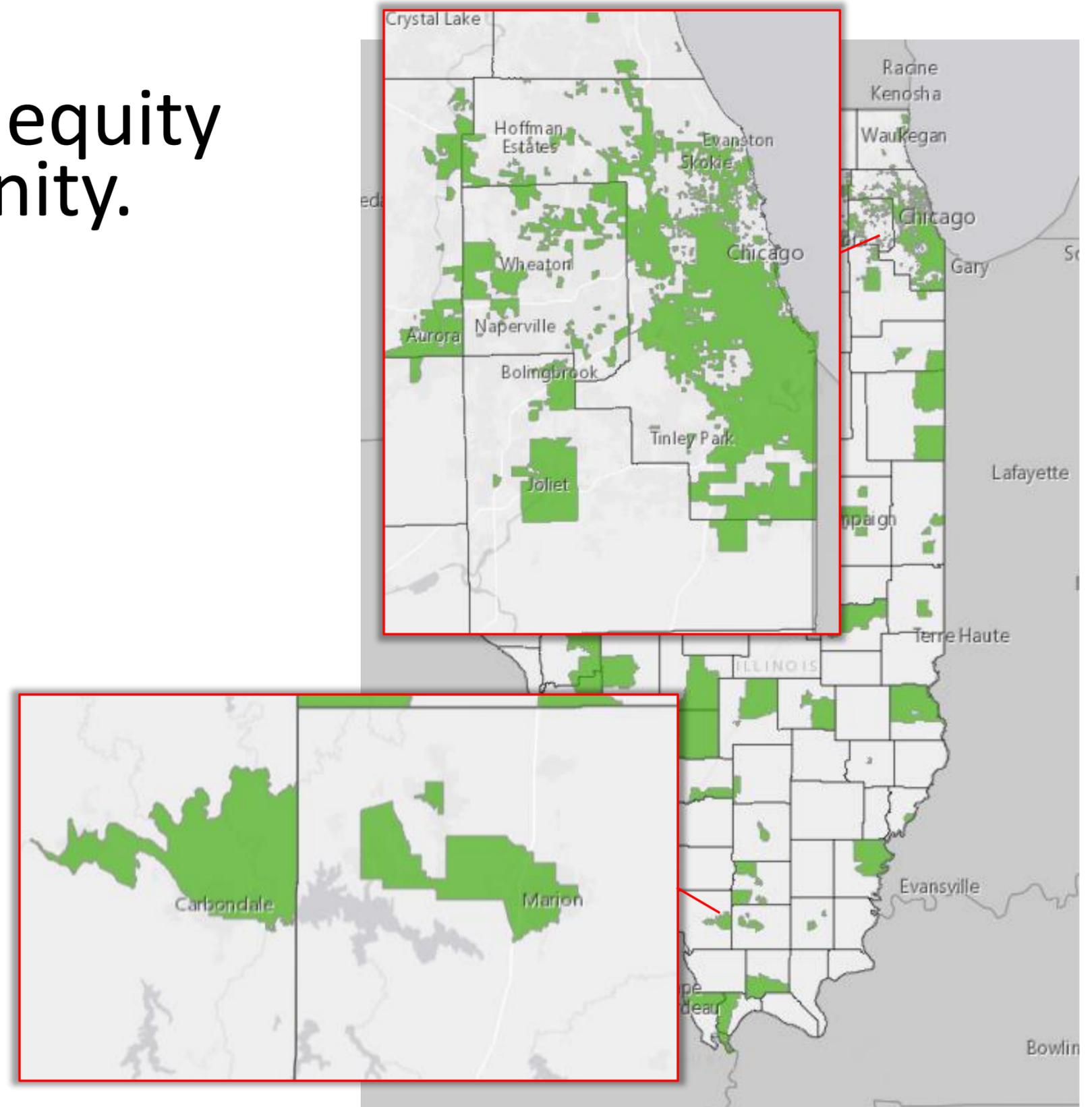


Funding

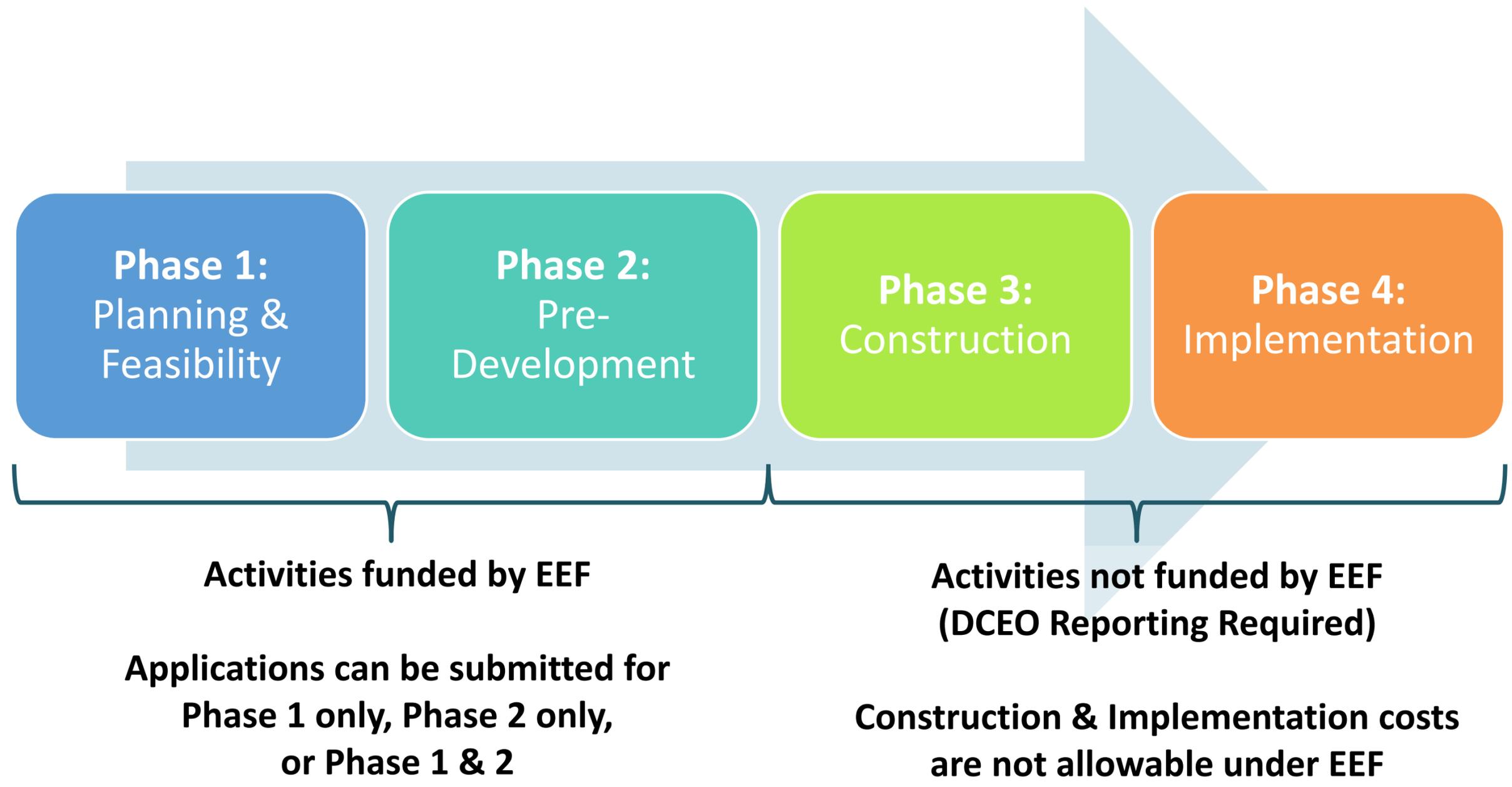
- **Total Funding:** \$25.5 million per year
- **Per Applicant Award:** \$250,000 - \$1,000,000
- **Estimated Number of Awards:** Up to 40
- **Applicants may apply for multiple projects.** However, applicants will only be approved for a total award amount of funds up to \$3 million between all projects.
- **Applicants may apply for both EEF and CSES.** However, they can only receive a maximum award between EEF and CSES of up to \$3 million.

Priority projects are those located in or supporting an equity investment eligible community.

- Environmental Justice communities
- Restore. Reinvest. Renew (R3) communities



Project Phases



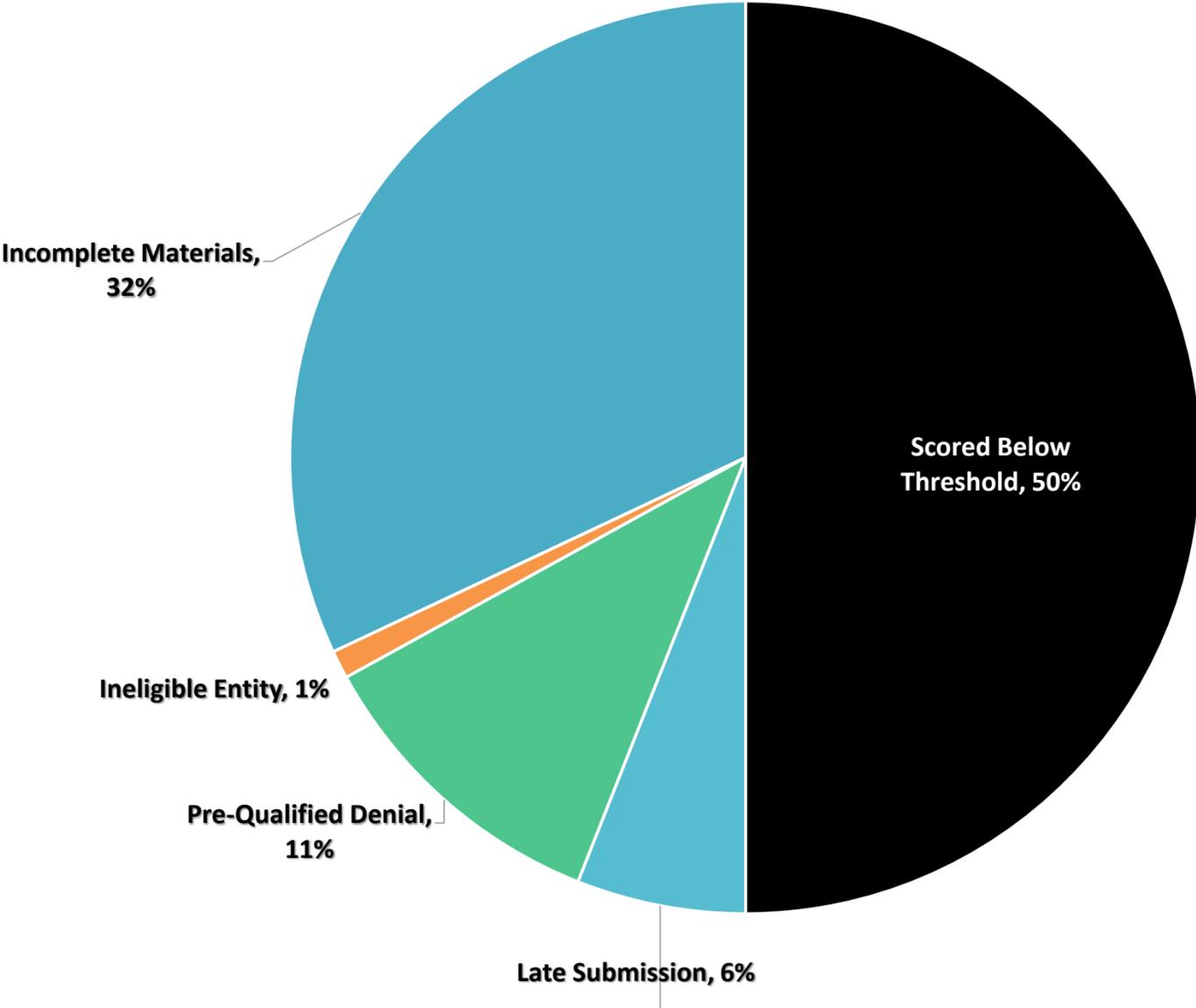
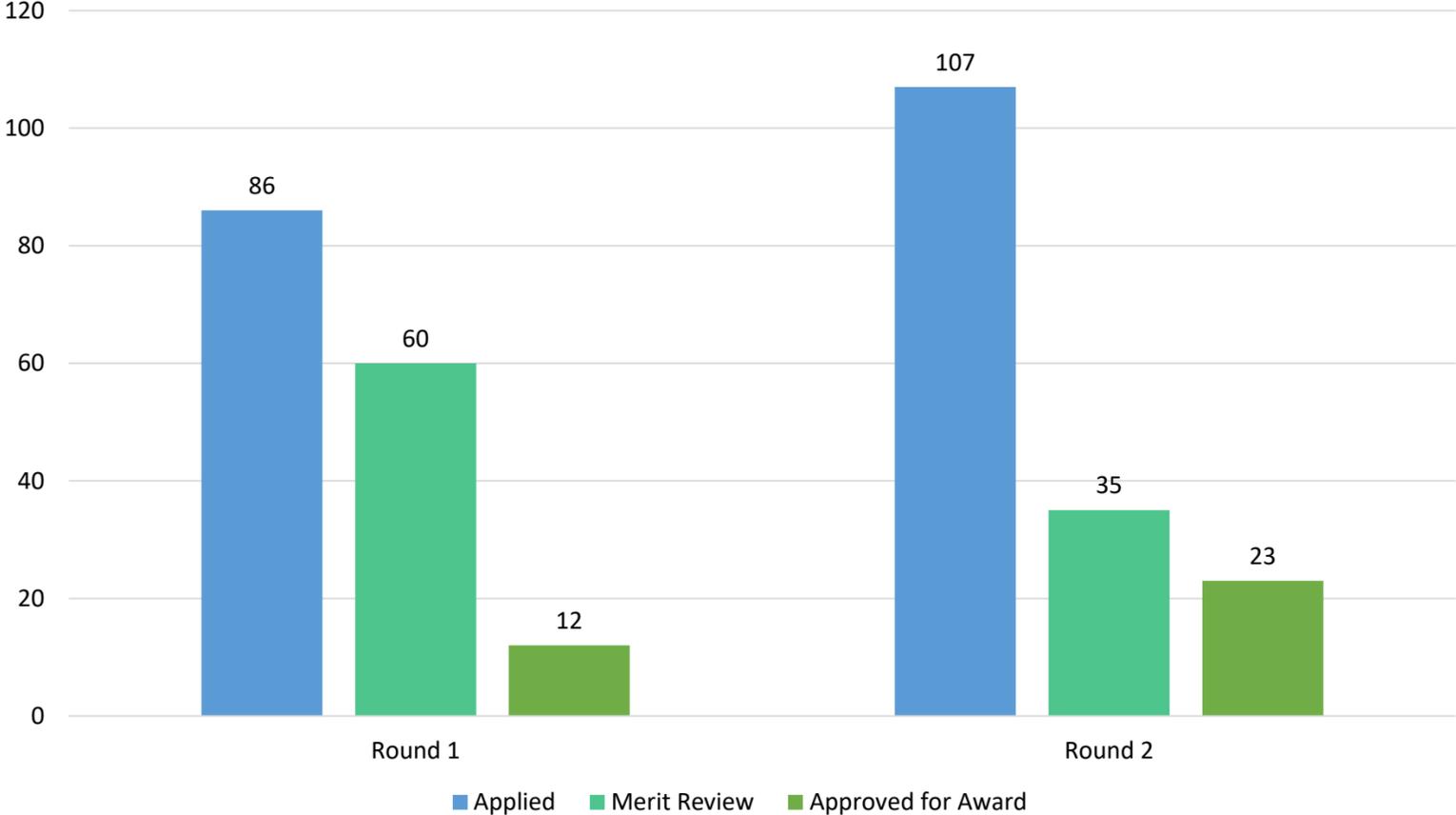
Allowable Activities

Phase 1: Planning and feasibility	Phase 2: Pre-development construction
Market analysis	Selecting contractors/securing contracts
Property due diligence	Project application costs
Community outreach & engagement	Purchasing/leasing land
Architecture, design, engineering services	Permitting/zoning
Auditing, consulting, developer services	Interconnection application costs, studies
Project pro-forma/budget	Equipment & supplies related to pre-development
Site acquisition planning	Employee training and training supplies
Sourcing project funding	Community outreach, marketing, engagement
Project grant writing	Staff & operations expenses
Interconnection application fees	Transmission line development
	Site remediation and clean up (capped funding)

Note: This is not an exhaustive list of all allowable costs

Equitable Energy Future – Grant Results

Application Results by Round



Breakdown of Application Denials Round 2

Total Amount Awarded (as of 6/3/2025) **\$29,726,94**

**Equitable Energy Future Round 2 is currently being processed. Round 2 numbers are as of 6/3/2025.*



Project Funding – Building Capital Stack

Project Funding



- Funds for EEF are disbursed based on project milestones determined during the negotiation process.
- Each milestone is connected to a critical decision point in the project.
- An agreed upon percentage of funds will be disbursed upon completion of each milestone until all milestones are completed.

Project Funding Example

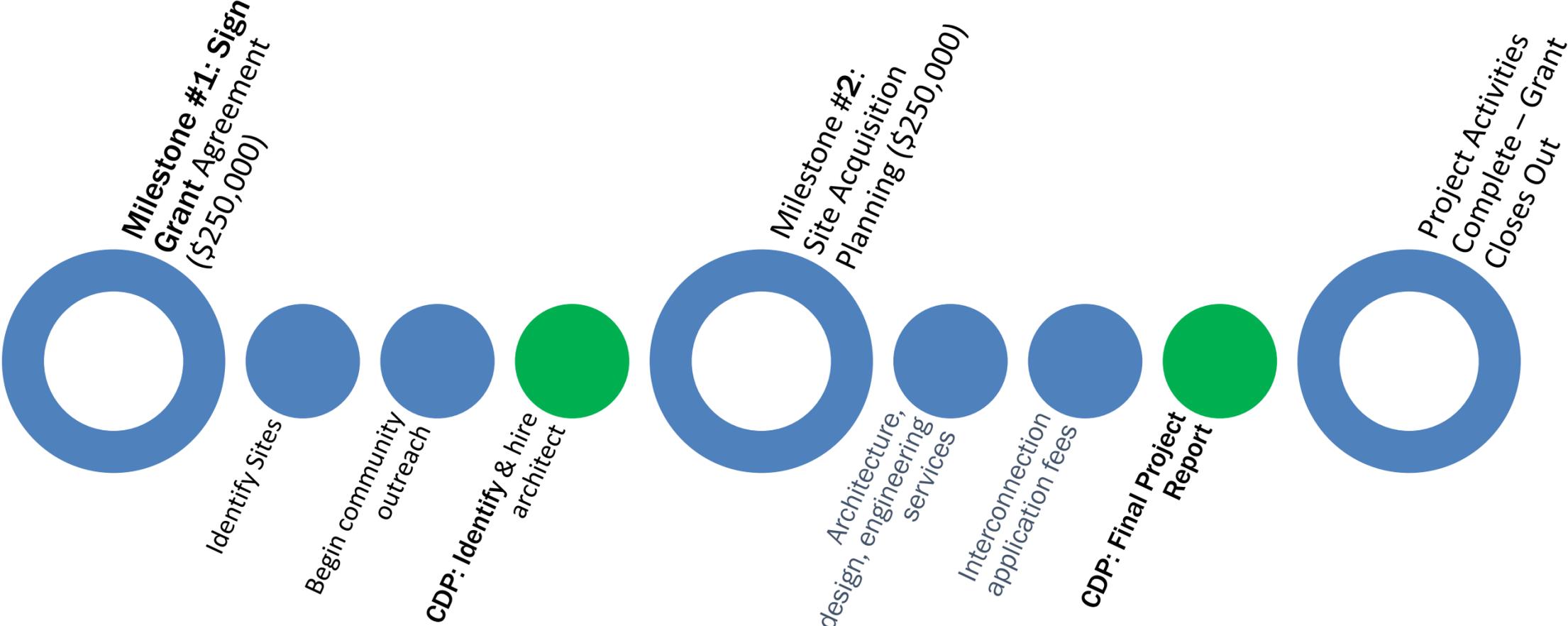
Grantee A

Award Amount: \$500,000

Number of Milestones: 2

Milestone Funding Percentage:
50% of grant funds per milestone

Funded Phase(s): Phase 1



Building the Capital Stack

Applicants must demonstrate how they plan to fund their project.

EEF funds only cover a portion of project funds.

Applicants are encouraged to explore other available funding opportunities through DCEO, other state agencies, federal support, loans, incentives, private equity etc.



Project Scenario: Non-profit organization, Net Zero/Near Net Zero Retrofit, located in and/or serves EJ/R3/DAC, mixed use commercial/residential building with market rate and low-income tenants

IFA

IPA

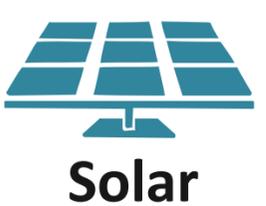
DCEO

IHDA

ICC

FEDS

Local



C-PACE 

Building Electrification 

REC Bridge Loan 

Bright Neighborhoods Pilot 

CEJA Equitable Energy Future Grant 

IRA-Tax Credit 

Energy Sovereignty Loan 

Community-Driven Community Solar 

ILSFA IL Shines/ Adjustable Block 

Community Solar Sovereignty Grant 

Green Resilient Retrofit Program 

Equitable Energy Upgrades 

TIF 

SSBCI 

EEP/EEC & Min. Equity Standard 

CEJA Incubator/ Accelerator 

CEJA Workforce Hub/ Pre-Apprentichip/ On The Job Training 

IRA-Tax Credit 

Working Capital 

Jobs and Justice Fund 

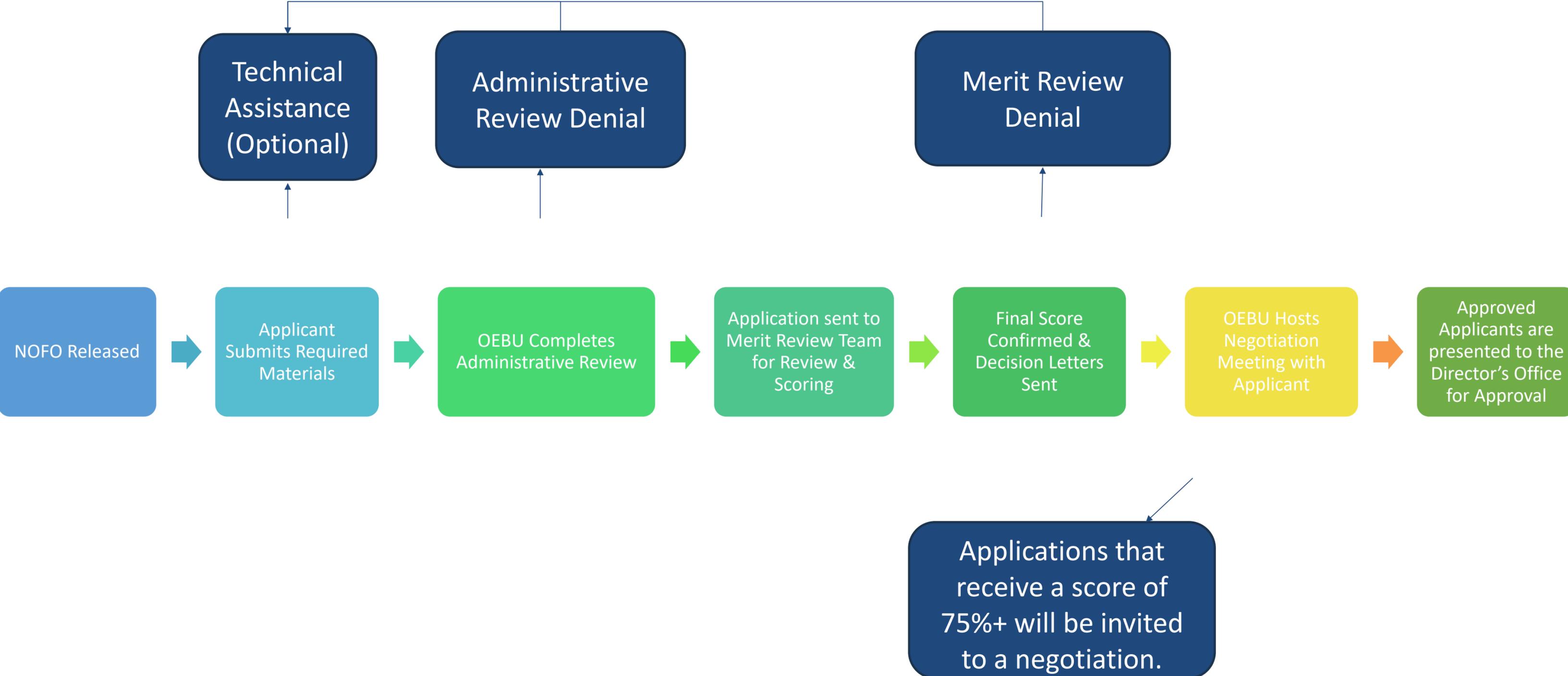
Illinois Renewable/Clean Energy Funding Opportunities

Applicants can also visit the [Clean Energy Funding Sources/Opportunities List](#) for additional funding opportunities

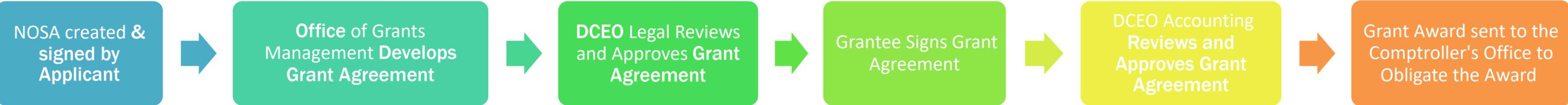
Agency	Programs
Federal Programs	IRA
Illinois Capital Development Board	Stretch Goals
Illinois Commerce Commission	Equitable Energy Upgrade Program
Illinois Community College Board	IAC Program: Clean Energy Build/Manufacturing Workforce
Illinois Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity	CEJA Workforce Training Programs CEJA Contractor Programs Community Economic Development Programs Reimagining Energy and Vehicles in Illinois Act (REV)-Manufacturing
Illinois Dept. of Transportation	National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program Competitive Freight-Port Infrastructure
Illinois Environmental Protection Agency	Energy Codes Training EE Trust Fund Electric Vehicle Rebate Electric School Bus Energy Assessments Energy Efficiency Conservation Block Grant Energy Efficiency Variety
Illinois Finance Authority	Illinois Climate Bank C-PACE GRID: muni. utility/rural coops State Small Bus. Credit Initiative Charging & Fueling Infrastructure Greenhouse Gas Reduction
Illinois Power Agency	Illinois Shines IL Solar For All Energy Equity Portal Min. Equity Standard Utility Scale Procurement
U.S. Dept of Energy	Funding and Financing

Note: Due to ongoing changes at the federal level some of these resources or funding opportunities may change.

Grant Process



Grant Process





**In the next 30 days, what
will you do to advance your
career?**

Contact:

CEO.CEJA@Illinois.gov

Aaron.McEvoy@Illinois.gov

Engage with the Hub

- Check out our updated resources
- Volunteer with us
- Share a featured building or project
- Sign up for our newsletter
- Follow us on LinkedIn



Thank you for joining us!