



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

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DCEO Launches Public Input Process for Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) Curriculum

DCEO seeks public input on Clean Jobs Workforce Curriculum for CEJA training programs

SPRINGFIELD — The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced public listening sessions and additional engagement opportunities to collect input on the Clean Jobs Curriculum which will be used in two new workforce training programs: the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program Hubs (Clean Jobs Hubs) and the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program. Aligned with the program requirements set under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA), interested parties can visit www.illinois.gov/dceo/ceja to provide input through public engagement sessions, surveys or through email.

“Through CEJA, Illinois is taking bold action to address climate change and prepare our workforce for jobs in the clean energy sector,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “With economic growth and jobs woven into its fabric, CEJA represents the most significant step Illinois has taken toward a reliable, renewable, affordable and clean energy future.”

The Clean Jobs Curriculum will create guidelines and benchmarks that will help CEJA training programs prepare Illinois’ workforce for jobs in the clean energy industry. The training programs that will use the curriculum will prioritize underrepresented populations and Illinoisans living in communities that have historically faced economic and environmental barriers, bolstering a diverse workforce in the clean energy industry.

“Our path to clean energy is not only about improving the quality of life of residents, but also growing our economy and providing good jobs that will also enhance our communities,” **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton**. “Our administration is committed to CEJA and collaborative work that uplifts programs and provides training and resources that will help Illinois continue to lead the charge in effective climate action.”

Gathering public input to develop the curriculum is the first step toward launching the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program Hubs (Clean Jobs Hubs) and the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program where the curriculum will be administered.

The Hubs – which will be located in 13 areas defined in state statute - will administer the curriculum and offer training and certifications to help Illinoisans secure clean energy jobs. The Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program will also utilize the curriculum to provide incarcerated individuals with the skills and support needed gain employment in the clean energy sector or enroll in a training program upon release. Both training programs – which will launch in 2023 - will be administered by qualified community-based or workforce organizations, which will be selected through a competitive application process.

“CEJA is a long-term, transformative plan to transition to zero emissions while preparing our workforce and communities for clean energy jobs,” **said DCEO Director Sylvia I. Garcia**. “CEJA provides the state with a tremendous opportunity to equitably provide job training and support opportunities to Illinoisans most impacted by climate change and energy transitions.”

As a first step in creating the curriculum, DCEO is seeking public input from employers, training providers, community-based organizations, workforce and advocacy organizations, and interested community members. Feedback will be gathered through listening sessions during small group break outs, and well as a survey and through direct feedback via email.

“Passing CEJA alone was a major accomplishment for the legislature, the Governor, and every activist for environmental justice that has dedicated themselves to leaving our planet better for the next generation,” **said State Rep. Robyn Gabel (D-Evanston)**. “By opening up the Clean Energy Jobs Curriculum to public input, we are making sure that these programs are implemented like they were crafted: with many diverse voices at the table.”

“CEJA programs are major investments in our workforce, so we need input from advocates, employers, trainers, and educators so we can get it right,” **said State Sen. Cristina Castro (D-Elgin)**. “The clean energy economy has boundless opportunities, but it will also require a highly skilled workforce that we need to be ready for. Building a top-notch curriculum is step one.”

“In Illinois, we value our workers by ensuring a living wage and safe conditions. We also invest in our workers so that they can reach their highest potential for their families and their communities,” **said State Rep. Marcus Evans (D-Chicago)**. “These listening sessions are a great step forward in making sure that those who are not usually engaged are able to make this curriculum the best that it can be.”

The listening sessions will be hosted by DCEO and their research and engagement partners from the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and Illinois public universities with experience in clean energy jobs and workforce development, including the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), Northern Illinois University, Chicago State University, Governor’s State University, Southern Illinois University Carbondale, Southern Illinois University Edwardsville, and Western Illinois University.

“As a leader in workforce development, Illinois community colleges are eager to expand the types of programs that will give Illinoisans the skills to meet the needs of emerging industries here in our state.

This public feedback will be valuable in helping shape those programs that will lead to good-paying careers for current and future generations,” **said ICCB Executive Director Brian Durham.**

Listening sessions will be held online via zoom at the times and dates listed below based on specified regions outlined in CEJA. Participants are encouraged to join a session aligned with their region but are welcome to join any session if they have scheduling conflicts. Advance registration is required, and information can be found below:

REGION	DATE/TIME	REGISTRATION LNK
Northern Illinois	Monday, Oct. 24 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Register here.
Northern Illinois	Thursday, Oct 27 11:00 am – 1:00 pm	Register here.
Central Illinois	Tuesday, Nov. 1 11:00 am – 1:00 pm	Register here.
Southern Illinois	Thursday, Nov. 3 3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	Register here.

In addition to public listening sessions, interested parties can submit feedback through a survey or by emailing the DCEO CEJA inbox. Stakeholders are also encouraged to sign up to receive updates on the CEJA workforce program launch and other engagement opportunities. Information can be found below:

- Survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/N8NWuX4wRw>
- Email to receive updates or for questions: CEO.CEJA@illinois.gov
- Interest form: <https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/354dfa104e0f4190b0e9f2b1404a6b03>

Feedback from stakeholders will be analyzed by university partners and then generated into a public report that will include findings, recommendations, and core curriculum identified by the stakeholders. These the guidelines in the report will inform the training programs taking place at the Hubs and Returning Residents Program.

Under CEJA, DCEO will administer \$180 million per year in workforce and community support programs designed to build Illinois’ clean energy economy and prepare the state’s workforce and communities for the jobs of the future.

In the near future, DCEO will also seek input on additional CEJA workforce programs through a public Request for Information (RFI) process. Interested individuals and organizations will be able to respond to questions about stakeholder needs, existing program resources, best practices, and program development. Following the RFI process, DCEO will launch competitive Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFO) to identify program partners, with the expectation that training programs launch in 2023.

DCEO is responsible for implementing programs to prepare Illinois’ workforce for the transition to clean energy and to support Illinois communities undergoing energy transitions, including the following:

- Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program (20 ILCS 730/5-45)
- Clean Energy Primes Contractor Accelerator Program (20 ILCS 730/5-55)
- Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (“Clean Jobs Hubs”)(20 ILCS 730/5-20)
- Coal to Solar and Energy Storage Initiative Fund (20 ILCS 3855/1-75)

- Energy Transition Barrier Reduction Program (20 ILCS 730/5-30)
- Energy Transition Community Support Grants (20 ILCS 730/10-20)
- Energy Transition Navigators Program (20 ILCS 730/5-35)
- Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program (20 ILCS 730/5-40)
- Jobs and Environmental Justice Grant Program (20 ILCS 730/5-60)
- Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program (20 ILCS 730/5-50)

Learn more about the CEJA workforce programs, the stakeholder process, and program launch at DCEO's CEJA Webpage: www.illinois.gov/dceo/ceja.