Governor Pritzker Announces $57 Million in Grant Awards Through the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act

Press Release - Thursday, March 20, 2025

Grant funding will bolster a diverse workforce in the clean energy industry

CHICAGO - Today, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced 88 awards totaling $57 million through the Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program ($7.7 million), Equitable Energy Future Grant Program ($10.3 million), and Energy Transition Community/Zion Grant Program ($39 million) - initiatives under the landmark Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA). These programs will catalyze energy efficiency and renewable energy projects that will help clean energy businesses grow and utilize Illinois' clean energy workforce.

"A true clean energy future is one that leaves no community behind," **said Governor JB Pritzker.**"Through the transformative Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, we're ensuring historically disadvantaged communities are at the forefront as we grow our clean energy economy. These grant programs are driving clean energy projects where they're needed most, creating opportunities and a future where all Illinoisans can thrive."

"These investments are more than just dollars—they are commitments to communities that have historically been left behind in the energy economy," **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton.** "By prioritizing workforce development, and innovation, we are ensuring that all Illinoisans—regardless of zip code—have access to the benefits of our growing clean energy sector."

Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program

Through the Community Solar Energy Sovereignty Grant Program, $7.7 million is being awarded to 11 grantees to more equitably grow the clean energy workforce. The program supports community-based organizations and technical service providers in low-income and historically disadvantaged communities to plan, develop, and execute community solar projects.

"The programs DCEO is administering through CEJA are essential to achieving our mission of a more sustainable future for Illinois," **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards.** "The State of Illinois is creating programs through an equitable lens to support communities that need it most and positive changes that will last for generations."

The goal of this grant program is to provide upfront seed capital funding to overcome barriers to project development caused by lack of capital in historically disadvantaged communities. The program prioritizes funding for community solar projects that are located in and provide benefits to environmental justice or Restore Reinvest Renew (R3) communities. Environmental

justice and R3 communities are areas where residents have historically been excluded from economic opportunities, including opportunities in the energy sector, and areas that experience high levels of pollution.

"The landmark Climate and Equitable Jobs Act is already changing lives and livelihoods across Illinois," **said Senate President Don Harmon (D - Oak Park).** "These grants will help us build upon the progress that has already been made through CEJA while bolstering a diverse clean energy workforce."

"CEJA programs are helping us prepare Illinois' world-class workforce for the clean energy jobs of the future," **said Assistant Majority Leader Marcus C. Evans, Jr. (D - Chicago).** "The State has designed equity-focused programs that remove barriers to entry and provide opportunities in historically disadvantaged communities."

Grantee	Location	Award Amount	Project Description
548 Development LLC	Chicago	$1,000,000	4300 W. Roosevelt Community Solar
548 Energy Solutions LLC	Chicago	$1,000,000	CHA Solar - Chicago
City of Springfield	Springfield	$100,000	Sunshine Savings
Clean Community	Cicero, Oak Lawn, Chicago, Westchester	$232,825	Clean Community Solar Project
Elizabeth L. Carter, Esq., LLC	Chicago	$984,800	Roseland Theatre Project
Green Energy Justice Cooperative, Inc	Aurora	$1,000,000	Community Solar Project - 2805 Duke Parkway Aurora
Green Energy Justice Cooperative, Inc	Naperville	$1,000,000	Community Solar Project - 2850 Duke Parkway Naperville
Green Energy Justice Cooperative, Inc	Romeoville	$1,000,000	Community Solar Project - Romeoville
St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral	Hanna City	$350,000	Hanna City ILSFA Project
Supreme Solutions Inc.	Champaign, Urbana	$500,000	Champaign and Urbana Community Solar Program
Supreme Solutions Inc.	Chicago	$500,000	Ford Heights Community Solar Fund

Equitable Energy Future Grant Program

The Equitable Energy Future Grant Program is delivering awards totaling $10.3 million to 12 grantees to provide seed funding and pre-development funding opportunities to equity eligible

contractors to work on renewable energy projects in low-income and historically disadvantaged communities. The goal of the Equitable Energy Future Grant Program is to help remove barriers to projects, community, and business development in communities that have been historically left behind due to lack of available capital.

Qualified entities included equity eligible contractors, non-profits, co-operatives majority-governed by equity eligible persons, and businesses or non-profits with a proposed project that meets equity building criteria. Equity eligible contractors are businesses or non-profits that are majority-owned by equity eligible persons, including participants/graduates of CEJA workforce programs, Illinoisans who are in the foster care system or who were formerly in the foster care system, people who were formerly incarcerated, and Illinoisans who live in an R3 zone or environmental justice community.

Grantee	Location	Award Amount	Project Description
548 Energy Solutions LLC	Chicago	$1,000,000.00	CHA Solar Installation
Adl Solutions LLC	Pembroke Township	$995,060.60	Pembroke Community Solar Project
ARF Solar	Alton	$250,000.00	Alton and Greater STL ILSFA 100% System Donation
BLV Holdings 1 LLC - BRS d/b/a Big Rock Sustainables LLC	Joliet	$1,000,000.00	1009 Spencer Rd. Joliet, IL 60433 (former Joliet Country Club)
Clean Community	Cicero, Oak Lawn, Chicago, Westchester	$355,125.00	Clean Community Solar Program
East Side Health District	East St. Louis	$998,353.80	East Side Health District East Side Health District (ESHD) Energy Transition Project
Greenlink Energy Solutions, Inc.	Rockford	$964,270.60	Solar for Nonprofits
Hawk-Attollo, LLC	Decatur	$901,000.00	Decatur Community Solar
Imani Works	Chicago	$1,000,000.00	Revitalizing and Re-energizing Chicago's South Side
Millennium Solar Electric Training Academy, Inc.	Monee	$999,891.65	250 KW Community Solar Farm
St. Paul's Episcopal Cathedral	Hanna City	$1,000,000.00	St. Paul's ILSFA Solar Farm for Peoria
The AOO Sustainable Group, Incorporated	Evanston, Blue Island	$835,880.00	Community-oriented renewable energy projects

Energy Transition Community/Zion Grant Program

Sixty-five localities and municipal entities will receive awards totaling $39 million through the Energy Transition Community/Zion Grants Program - an initiative under CEJA that provides funding for communities that have been impacted by closures or significant reductions of fossil fuel plants, coal mines, or the nuclear plant in Zion. Communities in 22 areas impacted by recent or impending plant or mine closures or reductions were eligible to apply for the program.

Both programs are designed to meet the needs of individual localities by addressing the economic and social impacts of plant closures. The funding can be used on a variety of initiatives and investments, including workforce investments, housing support, business attraction efforts, and more. Recipients were selected by responding to a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) with a letter of support from the municipality or county where the plant or mine was located.

As part of the program, the grantees will develop detailed plans for the grant funding, which includes stakeholder engagement and a detailed project design and budget that outlines specific intended uses for the grant funds. The community stakeholder engagement process is a critical element designed to ensure grantees solicit community input and consult with a diverse set of stakeholders to best support those most impacted by energy transitions.

Grant awards were calculated based on the economic impact of plant or mine closure, specifically, property tax losses and jobs lost due to the plant transition, with a minimum award of $50,000. A link to the full list of recipients can be found **here**.

The Community Solar Energy Sovereignty, Equitable Energy Future, and Energy Transition Community/Zion Grant Programs are among several contractor, workforce, and community support programs established by the landmark CEJA legislation intended to move Illinois to a 100% carbon-free future. Under CEJA, DCEO will administer $180 million per year in workforce and community support programs designed to enhance Illinois' clean energy economy and prepare the state's workforce and communities for the jobs of the future.

The CEJA training, contractor, and community investment programs administered by DCEO include:

- 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/Zion 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)