



GREEN NEWS

The Newsletter for ID's Clean Energy Incubator Program

Program Update

The First Class of the Clean Energy Incubator Cohort Program



On March 5, Innovation DuPage launched the first class of the Clean energy Incubator Cohort Program, with 13 clean energy companies participating.

Opportunities

Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund

The Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund is designed to help developers, contractors, and building owners finance clean energy and energy efficiency projects across Illinois. This program provides short-term bridge loans to cover upfront project costs while awaiting incentives, rebates, or tax credits, helping projects move forward without delays. Eligible upgrades may include solar, battery storage, geothermal systems, and energy efficiency improvements in commercial or multifamily buildings.

This program is a \$14 million revolving loan fund that will offer loans of up to \$1 million each for a short term (12-18 month) and, in some instances, more lengthy participation loans.

[To Learn More and Apply](#)

State Small Business Credit Initiative: Low-Interest Loans for Clean Energy Businesses

Illinois small businesses working in clean energy can access low-interest loans through the Illinois Climate Bank's SSBCI program. Loans range from \$25,000 to \$2 million at a flat rate of 1–2% annually, with terms up to 7 years. Eligible projects include solar, wind, EV charging, energy conservation, and more. Businesses must have fewer than 750 employees and operate in Illinois.

[To Learn More and Apply](#)

Illinois Innovation Voucher Program: Now Accepting Applications

Illinois small and mid-sized businesses can apply for vouchers covering up to 75% of costs (up to \$75,000) to partner with Illinois universities and research institutions on R&D projects. Eligible uses include product development, prototyping, testing, and access to labs and equipment. Applicants must be Illinois-based for-profit businesses.

[To Learn More and Apply](#)

Solar Jobs in Illinois: Research Participation Opportunity

The Climate Jobs Institute (CJI) at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign is conducting a **statewide study** to better understand working conditions and job quality in Illinois' solar industry. The study seeks input directly from current and former solar workers (particularly installation professionals and sales representatives), contractors, and employers.

Participants may choose to complete an interview, survey, or both:

- The interview lasts one hour (via Zoom or in person)
- The survey takes 15–20 minutes

All participation is **voluntary and confidential**. Interviews and surveys can be completed in English or Spanish. The study's findings will inform workforce development strategies and clean energy policy consideration in Illinois.

[Sign-up Link](#)

[Survey and Interview Incentives](#)

Allies for Community Business

Thank you to Brad McConnell, CEO of Allies for Community Business, for his presentation at our recent Member Meetup. Brad shared how Allies for Community Business provides capital, coaching, and connections to help entrepreneurs grow businesses that create jobs and wealth in their communities. Allies for Community Business offers loans up to \$500,000 to support community businesses.

[To Learn More](#)

Coming Up



Join biweekly Member Meetups at Innovation DuPage! Network, enjoy bagels & coffee, and learn from spotlight members & resource experts.

The next Member Meetup will be on March 18 from 9:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m.

Member Spotlight: Karin Knecht of Dunamis Coaching and Consulting

Member Resource: Jacob Barry of Illinois Science and Technology Coalition

Following the Member Meetup, there will be a Marketing Cluster meeting.

If you can't make it in person, attend virtually through our [Zoom Link](#)

[Sign up](#) to present at a future Member Meetup

APEX Accelerator: Annual Contracting Summit

3rd Annual Illinois Government Contracting Summit



Tuesday, March 17th, 2026

In-Person: 8:30 AM – 4:00 PM

- Learn how to “win” government contracts
- For small businesses seeking to perform services
- Sell products to the federal, state and municipal government within Illinois.

7600 Roosevelt Rd. Forest Park IL 60130

Our partners at the Illinois APEX Accelerator are hosting their 3rd Annual Government Contracting Summit on Tuesday, March 17 from 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

This full-day event connects small business owners with federal, state, and local government contracting opportunities, featuring panels, an SBA Mentor-Protégé Lunch & Learn, and one-on-one matchmaking sessions with procurement professionals.

[Register Here](#)

Clean Energy Leaders Dinner: RESCHEDULED



Please note: The previously announced March 25 dinner has been cancelled. Clean Tech Leaders Roundtable will be hosting another dinner on Monday, May 11 instead.

Clean Energy Incubator participants interested in attending the rescheduled event are encouraged to reach out to [Dan Facchini](#) or [Ricardo Magallon](#) to reserve a seat.

Industrial Water, Waste, & Sewage Group: Reflections on a Wet Past and Turbulent Future



Join the Industrial Water, Waste, & Sewage Group on Wednesday, March 18 for an evening with Debra Shore, one of the Midwest's leading environmental protection advocates. Shore will reflect on 18 years on the water and regulatory front, including her time as Regional Administrator of the US EPA's Region 5 and as Commissioner of the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District of Greater Chicago. Learn what's needed for a sustainable water future and where the action will be in the years ahead. Networking begins at 5:00 p.m. at Erie Cafe in Chicago.

[Register Here](#)

Clean Energy Incubator Workshop: Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy

Knowledge is Power: How C-PACE Financing Can Bring Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Projects to Life!



Anna Maria Kowalik

Monday, March 30th, 2026

In-Person: 5:00 – 6:30 PM

- What is Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy financing?
- How does C-PACE work?
- What are the qualifying property types and improvement measures?
- What are the benefits of using C-PACE in the capital stack?

535 Duane St. Glen Ellyn, IL 60137



The Clean Energy Incubator Program is hosting its first workshop at Innovation DuPage! Program participants and Innovation DuPage members are welcome to attend.

Anna Maria Kowalik will be stepping in for Shubha to lead a workshop on Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing on Monday, March 30. A 30-year commercial real estate veteran and nationally recognized C-PACE pioneer, Anna Maria has been "the Face of C-PACE" in Illinois and is a 2022 PACENation PACESETTER Award recipient.

Learn what C-PACE is, how it works, what projects qualify, and how to pair it with other incentives. Whether you're a founder, building owner, developer, or part of the clean energy ecosystem, this session will give you the tools to leverage C-PACE for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects..

[Register Here](#)

Policy

What the CRGA Act Means for Your Business

Illinois just passed the Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability (CRGA) Act, which builds on previous clean energy legislation and creates significant new opportunities for clean energy contractors. The Act mandates 3 gigawatts of battery storage deployment, expands energy efficiency programs, and creates a Virtual Power Plant program that will allow customers with batteries and solar to provide grid services and get paid. It also funds geothermal energy network pilot programs and strengthens protections against solar fraud, helping legitimate installers compete fairly. Funding and program rollouts will occur gradually depending on regulatory approvals and program development.

[Read More Here](#)

Resources

To access any of the resources below, Please reach out to [Ricardo Magallon](#) or [Arlinda Bajrami](#). They will help you get connected, determine eligibility, and guide you through next steps.

Newsletter Access:

Want to add a team member or partner to the Green News mailing list? Contact [Arlinda](#) to get them subscribed.

Grant Writing:

Jessica Wain — Hobbs & Wain Advancement Partners
We're excited to welcome Jessica Wain as a new resource for CEI Program companies. Jessica provides grant writing and proposal development support, helping you identify, pursue, and secure funding opportunities that can accelerate your company's growth and scalability.

Legal Support:

CEI Program Participants can receive legal support and potential expense reimbursement for assistance with:

- Structuring or restructuring your business
- Intellectual property protection
- Contracts, compliance, or general advisement

Interns:

We are partnering with the CEJA Aurora Workforce Hub to offer CEI companies access to paid interns in the following clean-energy career pathways:

- Commercial Energy Auditor
- Solar Installer and Sales
- HVAC-R Entry-Level Technician

This initiative is currently being developed, but we anticipate making these short-term internship opportunities available, March 1 through May 31.

ID Team Support:

- **Mike Varon** - Strategic Business Advisor
- **Ozge Guney** - Strategic Business Advisor
- **Heidi Kuharich** - Program Instructional Designer
- **Arlinda Bajrami** - Program Manager
- **Ricardo Magallon** - Director
- **Dan Facchini** - Managing Director

[Member Portal Login Page](#)

[Member Meetup Signup Sheet](#)

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