



# GREEN NEWS

*The Newsletter for The CEJA Illinois Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program*

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## Coming Up

### **The Office of Economic Equity & Empowerment (OE3) | Monthly Webinars: June 3 - December 2**

The Illinois Office of Economic Equity and Empowerment (OE3) hosts regular online sessions connecting business owners with the latest financial resources from state, federal, and local programs, as well as funding opportunities from private and community organizations.

Business Development Managers are available to answer questions in English and Spanish, and attendees receive a follow-up email recap of all resources shared. Sessions are not recorded.

Choose one or more dates to attend.

[To Learn More and Register](#)

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**Argonne National Laboratory | Open House: June 27**



**SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 2026**

**9:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.**

**Participate in tours,  
hand-on activities,  
and demonstrations!**

- Free event
- Open to the public
- Registration required



[www.anl.gov/open-house/2026](http://www.anl.gov/open-house/2026)

Scan the QR code or visit our website to learn more.

**Registration opens May 27, 2026**



U.S. DEPARTMENT  
of ENERGY

Argonne National Laboratory is a  
U.S. Department of Energy laboratory  
managed by UChicago Argonne, LLC.

Argonne National Laboratory is opening its doors to the public on Saturday, June 27 for a free, family-friendly open house. Visitors can explore world-class research facilities through hands-on activities, demonstrations, and tours — and meet the scientists and engineers behind the work.

For additional information and to put your name on the registration invitation list, please visit [www.anl.gov/open-house/2026](http://www.anl.gov/open-house/2026)

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**Goodwill Greater Milwaukee & Chicago | CEJA Clean  
Energy Job Fair: July 9**



# CEJA CLEAN ENERGY JOB FAIR

The next step in your career.

Whether you're seeking employment or exploring a new industry, this is your chance to connect with companies offering a wide variety of job openings. Don't miss the opportunity to meet potential employers and discover exciting career paths.

**THURSDAY, JULY 9**

**10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.**

Goodwill Workforce Connection Center  
61 S. Broadway,  
Aurora IL 60505

Goodwill Greater Milwaukee & Chicago  
partners with local businesses to fulfill  
our mission: **Connecting people to work.**  
**Preparing people for life.**

## Featured Positions

- Build Maintenance
- Electrical
- HVAC
- Forklift
- CNC
- Industrial Maintenance
- and more!

For questions contact:  
Moneida Davis  
moneida.davis@goodwillgreatermc.org  
630-520-4237



Goodwill Greater Milwaukee & Chicago, in partnership with local organizations, is hosting a CEJA Clean Energy Job Fair on Thursday, July 9, from 10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. at the Goodwill Workforce Connection Center, located at 61 S. Broadway in Aurora. The event is open to individuals seeking employment opportunities or exploring careers in the clean energy industry.

Interested? Reach out to [Moneida Davis](#) for more information.

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## Member Tour | Argonne National Laboratory: July 21

Due to a scheduling change, the Argonne National Laboratory tour has been moved to Monday, July 21, from 1:00–4:00 p.m. Please plan to arrive by 12:45 p.m. Innovation DuPage members are invited to tour one of the world's leading scientific research facilities.

Interested? Reach out to [Ricardo Magallon](#), for more details.

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# Opportunities

## Illinois DCEO | Energy Equity Futures Grant: Funding Opportunity Coming Q3 2026

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Office of Energy and Business Utility anticipates releasing the next Energy Equity Futures (EEF) Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) during the third quarter of 2026. Organizations and individuals interested in future funding opportunities, program updates, and other CEJA-related announcements are encouraged to sign up for email updates to stay informed as additional information becomes available.

[To Sign Up](#)

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## U.S. Chamber of Commerce | Small Business B(AI)sics: Free AI Training Program

The U.S. Chamber of Commerce recently launched “Small Business B(AI)sics,” a free national AI training program for small business owners. The program offers courses designed to help entrepreneurs understand and integrate AI into their daily operations.

[To Learn More](#)

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## National Energy Improvement Fund | Financing for Energy Efficiency & Renewable Projects

The National Energy Improvement Fund (NEIF) specializes in financing virtually any type of energy efficiency, renewable energy, and resilience projects for commercial, non-profit, and municipal properties.

[To Learn More](#)

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## NSF Seed Fund | SBIR/STTR Program Reopening for Submissions

The NSF Seed Fund, the federal SBIR/STTR program, is reopening for submissions next week. This national program provides non-dilutive funding for companies developing high-impact, early-stage technology.

Phase I awards are typically around \$300,000 for R&D, with Phase II funding of \$1M or more to continue development toward market readiness. Illinois-

based recipients may also be eligible for IL DCEO matching funds — up to \$75,000 for Phase I and \$250,000 for Phase II.

To get started, complete a [Project Pitch Assessment](#) and submit a [Project Pitch](#). Applicants are notified within one to two months whether they are invited to submit a full proposal.

Need help with your pitch? Reach out to [Jess Wain](#).

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## MEEA | Fundamentals of Energy Efficient Building Operations (FEEBO)

The Midwest Energy Efficiency Alliance (MEEA) offers FEEBO, an 18-hour course covering the principles of energy efficiency and preventative maintenance in commercial buildings. Topics include HVAC fundamentals, lighting, energy conservation, and indoor environmental quality — delivered over three full days or six half days.

The course is designed for those entering building operations, existing facilities personnel, and professionals whose work intersects with the built environment.

Interested? Reach out to [Arlinda Bajrami](#) for more information.

[FEEBO Flyer](#)

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## RFP | Battery-Electric Ferry Design Services — Rock Island County

The Rock Island County Metropolitan Mass Transit District is seeking qualified firms to provide design services, shipyard RFP support, and commissioning services for a battery-electric small passenger ferry vessel.

The selected firm will also identify and specify a compatible charging station and coordinate electrical infrastructure installation requirements.

Proposals due: July 20, 2026 at 2:00 p.m. CT

[To Learn More](#)

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## 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

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## 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

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# Policy

## Illinois Worker Preference Requirement Now in Effect

If your project is funded by State of Illinois grants, a new compliance requirement is now active. Under the **Employment of Illinois Workers on Public Works Act** (30 ILCS 570), contractors on state-funded public works projects must use **at least 90% Illinois-based laborers** during periods of high unemployment.

This requirement was triggered because Illinois unemployment exceeded 5% for two consecutive months. It remains in effect until unemployment drops back below that threshold.

**What this means for you:** If your project involves construction or public works activity tied to state funding, review your contractor agreements to ensure compliance.

**Need a waiver?** Exceptions are available if Illinois workers are unavailable, unqualified for the specific work, or if compliance conflicts with federal law. Waiver requests must be submitted in writing with supporting documentation through your grant manager.

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## Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability Act: Now in Effect

The Clean and Reliable Grid Affordability (CRGA) Act took effect June 1, 2026. The law creates new opportunities for clean energy contractors and businesses, including:

- Expanded battery storage deployment

- New energy efficiency programs
- A Virtual Power Plant program
- Geothermal network pilot programs
- Stronger protections against solar fraud

Funding and program rollouts will occur gradually as regulatory approvals and program development timelines are met. For more information, refer to the factsheets developed by Elevate.

[CRGA Factsheet](#)

[CRGA Overview](#)

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## Latest Illinois Green Policy Update: March 2026

Illinois Green Alliance's latest policy update covers legislation currently being considered by the Illinois General Assembly, including the POWER (Protecting Our Water, Energy, and Ratepayers) Act, Plug-In Solar, and Utility Data Access for Gas Utilities.

[Read More Here](#)

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## Partner Resources

Just upstairs from Innovation DuPage is the **Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC)**, part of College of DuPage's Business Development Center. SBDC advisors provide confidential guidance, training, and resources to start-up and existing small businesses, helping with everything from securing business capital and marketing to commercializing new ideas and developing innovative products and services. Client projects range from early-stage, pre-revenue concepts to established business operations.

[To Learn More](#)

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**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.

[Schedule a Session: Allies for Community Business](#)

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The Illinois EPA Office of Energy supports energy efficiency, resiliency, and clean energy through public partnerships and inter-agency collaborations to reduce energy burden and improve energy equity in Illinois.

[Office of Energy: Listserv Sign-up](#)

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The **Building Energy Hub** is designed for building developers, owners, operators, managers, and contractors. It provides education, highlights relevant tools, and connects you to key resources to support your clean energy projects. Explore playbooks, financing opportunities, case studies, and more.

[Building Energy Hub Website](#)

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## ID Resources

Businesses who haven't completed onboarding do so as soon as possible.

**The below steps should be completed by all Clean Energy Incubator Program members:**

1. Schedule a meeting with [Beth Ann Wymyslowski](#) Innovation DuPage member onboarding
  2. Schedule a meeting with [Anushka Verma](#) for tech stack onboarding
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### **ID Mentoring Program:**

A flexible, high-impact program that connects CEI members with vetted industry experts for 1:1 mentorship tailored to their needs. Whether you're seeking a one-time conversation or an ongoing relationship, mentors provide guidance, insight, connections, and encouragement while helping you stay accountable to your goals.

Support areas include business development, funding and loans, legal guidance, business planning, marketing, government contracting, and more. The program is designed to be adaptable and collaborative, allowing you and your mentor to co-create a structure that best fits your journey and level of support needed.

[ID Mentor Directory](#)

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### **Grant Writing:**

Jess Wain — Hobbs & Wain Advancement Partners

Jess provides grant writing and proposal development support, helping you identify, pursue, and secure funding opportunities that can accelerate your

company's growth and scalability.

[Jessica's Booking Link](#)

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#### **Get Your Company Listed on Pitchbook:**

Pitchbook is a leading private market database used by investors, VCs, and strategic partners to discover and research early-stage companies. Innovation DuPage is now offering all members the opportunity to be listed under ID's profile — giving your company added visibility and third-party validation as a program participant. This is an opt-in benefit available to all active members.

Interested? Reach out to [Elina Conley](#) to get started.

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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.

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#### **Newsletter Access:**

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

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#### **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
- 

#### **ID Team Support:**

- [Mike Varon](#) - Strategic Business Advisor
  - [Ozge Guney](#) - Strategic Business Advisor
  - [Heidi Kuharich](#) - Program Instructional Designer
  - [Arlinda Bajrami](#) - Interim Program Manager
  - [Ricardo Magallon](#) - Interim Program Director
  - [Hiba Anjum](#) - Program Associate
  - [Dan Facchini](#) - Managing Director
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[Member Portal Login Page](#)

[Member Meetup Signup Sheet](#)

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**Illinois**  
**Department of Commerce**  
& Economic Opportunity

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