Clean Energy Jobs AND Justice Fund

Request for Proposals: Independent Auditor

Purpose

The Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund (CEJJF) seeks a qualified accountancy/professional services firm to provide financial audit services.

Overview of the Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund

CEJJF was established through the Clean Energy Jobs Act, which was passed by the Illinois Legislature and signed into law by Governor JB Pritzker in 2021. CEJJF serves as Illinois's nonprofit green bank with the purpose of making clean energy and energy efficiency products accessible to everyone while also ensuring that the benefits of the clean energy transition are equitably distributed. To that end, CEJJF is developing innovative financing products and programs for low-income, environmental justice, and BIPOC communities, minority business enterprises (MBEs), contractors of colors, and businesses that support them.

CEJJF was incorporated in 2022 and has been guided by a ten-member board of directors appointed by Governor Pritzker. With the recent hiring of an executive director, CEJJF is launching its early operations, building its first set of financial products and services, and pursuing its initial capitalization. See the Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund website for more information.

CEJJF has a management services agreement with Public Sector Consultants (PSC) to provide staffing and other services. Through PSC, CEJJF has four full-time staff members.

Financial Overview

Fiscal Year 2025 was CEJJF's first full year of operations. The annual operating budget in FY 2025 was approximately $1.2M and is $1.8M in FY 2026. CEJJF has three primary sources of funding: an annual operating grant from the State of Illinois, general operating funds from foundations, and a $250,000 federal grant. On average, CEJJF processed fewer than 10 financial transactions per month in FY 2025 and issued no loans during the fiscal year. Programming is launching in FY 2026 and the complexity of the organization's finances is anticipated to grow over the next two years. The cost of the bid should reflect the early stage of operations in FY 2025.

Services Requested

CEJJF seeks an established and well-respected accountancy/professional services firm to provide the following services:

- Conduct the annual audit of the organization's financial statements for the year ending on December 31, 2025; options to renew based on acceptable performance for up to five years are expected
- Prepare the related management letter
- Present the audit results and management letter at the CEJJF Board of Directors Finance Committee meeting
- Prepare a transmittal letter and certified financial statements to CEJJF grantors, including but not limited to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity
- Optional services can include preparation of an extension request (if needed) and the annual IRS Form 990

Selection Criteria

CEJJF expects to award a contract to a firm that proposes the best approach to the work. Applicants may be individual contractors or established firms.

Selection will be based on the following:

Qualifications and Experience

- Substantial prior experience auditing nonprofit organizations
- Experience providing financial audit services for similarly sized for-profit and nonprofit organizations with multiple revenue/expenditure accounts
- Experience with various lending approaches, including credit enhancement structures deployed to attract private capital and direct lending using a revolving loan fund
- Appropriate qualifications and previous experience of staff assigned to work with CEJJF (both supervisory and day-to-day staff)
- Prior experience performing Single Audits (formerly OMB Circular A-133 audits) is preferred
- Absence of conflicts of interest
- Demonstrated commitment to serving low-income, BIPOC, and environmental justice communities and the businesses that support them
- Satisfactory peer review report and feedback from references
- Experience supporting early stage organizations

Audit Approach

- Demonstrated understanding of the audit's scope and intent
- Consistency with the overall objectives of the scope of services requested
- Comprehensiveness and adequacy of the audit approach
- Concrete benchmarks and timeline

Fees

- Satisfactory justification for proposed fees and costs

Submission Requirements

To respond to this request for proposals (RFP), please submit a narrative that includes the following:

Qualifications and Experience

- Qualifications and experience in providing auditing services for nonprofit and for-profit organizations, including organizations of comparable type, size, and development stage.
- A description of the firm's experience performing Single Audits (formerly OMB A-133 audits)
- The size and organizational structure of the auditor's firm
- Statement of the firm's understanding of the work to be performed, including tax and nonaudit services, if applicable
- Qualification of the person responsible for the auditing service (please note if the person responsible is a firm partner) and their expected role and involvement in the audit
- Qualifications and experience of the staff (or others if subcontracting) who may work on the project and their role in the audit
- A statement on how the firm supports BIPOC, environmental justice, and LIDAC communities, and MBEs. This should include examples of policies, partnerships, or initiatives that promote equity and economic opportunities for historically marginalized groups.
- Assurance that providing services to CEJJF under this RFP does not constitute a conflict of interest for the firm, CEJJF, or Public Sector Consultants
- A list of the nonprofit clients the firm has audited in the past three years and the names and telephone numbers of three of these clients whom CEJJF may contact
- A copy of the firm's latest peer review report, the related letter of comments, and the firm's response to the letter of comments
- A completed CEJJF Diverse Vendor Form (Appendix A)

Audit Approach

- A description of how the firm will approach the CEJJF audit, including a timeline and key benchmarks, areas of emphasis, technology type and use, and the communication process the firm will use to discuss issues with management and the finance committee

Fees

- The firm's proposed fee structure
- A description of the firm's billing rates and procedures for technical questions that may come up during the year or whether these occasional services are covered in the proposed fee structure
- A separate estimation of fees for providing annual IRS Form 990 and extension request

Prospective firms may include any other information CEJJF should consider. All responses will be treated as confidential. CEJJF is not liable for any costs applicants incur in responding to this RFP. After reviewing the responses, CEJJF may interview one or more respondents and engage in negotiations regarding the scope of work, roles, and other details. CEJJF expects to award a contract to a firm that has the best combination of experience with similar work and reasonableness of costs in March 2026 and begin the audit process immediately after.

Submission Instructions and Timeline

Please submit responses via email to Krystal Garcia Centeno (kgcenteno@cleanenergyjobsjustice.org) by 5:00 p.m. CDT on March 6, 2026. If applicants have any questions in advance of the proposal deadline, please email Krystal Garcia Centeno no laterthan 5:00 p.m. CDT on February 19, 2026. Responses to questions will then be circulated to all interested parties in one email.

RFP Schedule

RFP release: Monday, February 9, 2026

Deadline for submitting questions: By 5:00 p.m. CDT, Thursday, February 19, 2026

Deadline for CEJJF response to questions: Thursday, February 26, 2026

Deadline for submitting RFP response: By 5:00 p.m. CDT, Friday, March 6, 2026

Successful bidder contacted: Week of March 12, 2026

Anticipated start date: March 26, 2026

Clean Energy Jobs AND Justice Fund

Appendix A: Request for Vendor Information

Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund is committed to engaging with vendors that reflect the diversity of the many communities we serve. Our Diverse Vendor Program is an intentional opportunity for Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund to support our mission and break down barriers to growth that exist for minority business owners and ensure that everyone—without exception—has access to the benefits of energy efficiency.

Vendor Name: _____

Date: _____

Signature: _____

Please check all that apply to your company:

- ☐ Disability-Owned Business Enterprise
  - People with disabilities own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Business Enterprise
  - LGBTQ+ individuals own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Minority-Owned Business
  - Minority group members own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Service-Disabled Veteran-Owned Business
  - Service-disabled veterans own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Social Enterprise Business
  - A for-profit or nonprofit organization or venture that achieves its primary social or environmental mission using business methods.
    Surplus is principally reinvested in social activities, not driven by need to maximize profit for shareholders and owners.

- ☐ Supported Business
  - Over 50 percent of the business's workforce are disabled individuals.
- ☐ Veteran-Owned Business
  - Veterans own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Women's Business Enterprise
  - Women own and control at least 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ Women-Owned Small Business
  - The company must be a small business.
  - Women own and control 51 percent of the company.
- ☐ None of these

Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund understands that the complex, and at times high-cost, diverse business certification process can present inequitable barriers for small businesses and thus does not require diverse business certification from a national, state, or locally recognized third-party certification agency. Please self-certify if any of the above apply to your business.

While Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund does not guarantee business to any vendor, we are committed to providing diverse companies an opportunity to compete on a fair and equal basis for our business.