Clean Energy Jobs AND Justice Fund

Predevelopment Bridge Loan Pilot

Pilot Application

The Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund (CEJJF) is Illinois' nonprofit green bank, created through the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA). Its mission is to advance a fair and inclusive transition to clean energy across Illinois by expanding access to capital for clean energy businesses that face barriers to traditional financing, helping homeowners and small businesses lower their energy costs, and facilitating frontline communities' access to clean energy solutions that foster healthier environments and stronger local economies.

CEJJF is now accepting applications to participate in its Predevelopment Bridge Loan Product pilot from businesses, municipalities, and organizations with a pending Equitable Energy Future (EEF) or Community Solar Energy Sovereignty (CSES) round three grant award.

> **This is an application to participate in the pilot loan program. It is not a loan application.**
> If you are invited into the pilot program, CEJJF will provide a separate loan application together with the required document checklist, and you will have four weeks from the date of the invitation to complete the application, with support provided by CEJJF staff. An invitation to the pilot program is not a credit decision and does not commit CEJJF to making a loan.

CEJJF anticipates issuing four to six loans under the pilot program by December 31, 2026.

Applications to participate in the pilot program that are received by September 11, 2026 will be prioritized for review. Applications received after that date are reviewed weekly on a rolling basis. To support diverse geographic representation across Illinois, CEJJF will prioritize pilot applications based on the regional location of the project through September 25, 2026. After that date, invitations are issued based on greatest alignment with CEJJF priorities.

The period to apply to participate in the pilot closes once all funds have been committed or on December 31, 2026, whichever is first. Loans made under the pilot continue to be serviced by CEJJF after that date under their own terms.

CEJJF will provide a response to every pilot applicant. If you are not selected, CEJJF will notify you by email within one month of applying. If you meet the required criteria, but a space is not available, CEJJF will notify you that your application is on hold until a space in the pilot becomes available.

CEJJF will make up to one loan per entity under the pilot. If you have more than one project with a pending award,

you are welcome to submit an application to participate for each.

About the Predevelopment Bridge Loan

The pilot is testing a short-term loan that lets predevelopment work begin before DCEO grant funds arrive.

Purpose	Working capital to bridge to the first tranche of DCEO EEF and CSES grants
Loan amount	Ordinarily $100,000 to $200,000. A loan will not exceed the first tranche of the borrower's DCEO award.
Interest rate and fees	3% fixed annual interest, charged on the outstanding principal balance. No application or processing fees are charged by CEJJF.
Repayment	No interest or principal payments before February 15, 2027

Full terms and conditions, including rate, fees, and the conditions CEJJF places on the handling of grant proceeds, are set out in the loan documents CEJJF provides with the invitation. Please direct questions about the program or application to Zach McGuire at zmcguire@cleanenergyjobsjustice.org.

Selection Criteria for Pilot Participation

Among applicants that meet the pilot requirements, CEJJF prioritizes outreach to those aligned with the criteria below. Not all criteria must be met for an applicant to be invited into the pilot.

Existing DCEO grantee	Prior experience as a DCEO grantee demonstrates foundational administrative and compliance capacity
Geographic diversity within Illinois	CEJJF serves the entire state of Illinois. Therefore, it prioritizes geographic diversity in project selection across the state.
Project type	CEJJF considers project type in order to test the product across a mix of project types and predevelopment cost profiles during the pilot period
Awaiting first tranche of DCEO grant	CEJJF aims to support projects where predevelopment work is unable to begin due to delay in the release of grant funds
Partnership capacity	A history of partnership with DCEO, CEJJF, or other contractors
Emerging business with limited access to capital	CEJJF prioritizes borrowers facing historical and structural barriers to conventional financing. Awardees with significant access to other sources of capital are deprioritized

How to Submit

A completed form should be submitted to lending@cleanenergyjobsjustice.org.

For priority consideration, please submit by 11:59 Central Time on September 11, 2026.

Applications received after this date will be reviewed weekly on a rolling basis.

Saving your answers

Open this form in Adobe Acrobat Reader or Preview, type your answers into the fields, and save the file when you are done. Saving normally keeps your answers editable if you need to revise them.

Please name your file OrganizationName.pdf. If you submit more than one application, number them: OrganizationName1.pdf, OrganizationName2.pdf, and so on.

Application

Answer every question. If a question does not apply to you, please write “not applicable” rather than leaving it blank.

Complete one application for each pending award for which you are seeking bridge funding. CEJJF will issue only up to one loan per organization, business, or project in this pilot program.

Section 1. Requirements

You must meet both requirements below to be considered for the pilot. A Notice of State Award is not required at this stage, but you must have a pending award from the DCEO for the project you are submitting.

Name of person submitting this form	
Title and organization	
Email	
Telephone number	

1.1 Is the recipient organization based in Illinois? Recipient organizations include developers, contractors, community based organizations, and municipalities.

Yes No

1.2 Does the organization have a pending award in a round three EEF or CSES grant?

Yes No

If the answer to either question is no, you are ineligible for this pilot program.

1.3 Which type of grant is pending for this project? Answer EEF or CSES.	

Section 2. Applicant Information

2.1 Legal name of the recipient organization

2.2 Any other name the organization operates under

2.3 Illinois business address

2.4 Contact name and title

2.5 Contact email and telephone

2.6 Contractor or developer entity delivering the project, if different from 2.1. If the applicant is a community based organization or a municipality, name the contractor or developer that will be used for the project.

2.7 Lead contact, telephone number, and email for that contractor or developer.

Section 3. Grant Award

The loan bridges to the first tranche of your DCEO award, so the size of that first tranche sets the ceiling on what CEJJF can lend. Answer these as precisely as you can.

3.1 Anticipated round three award amount

3.2 Has a Notice of State Award been issued? If yes, provide the date of receipt.

3.3 Have you received any grant funds to date? If yes, state the amount and the date received.

3.4 Anticipated amount of the first tranche under your award

Section 4. Project

4.1 Project name

4.2 Project street address, city, and ZIP

4.3 County

4.4 Project size or capacity

4.5 Current stage of the project

4.6 Anticipated construction start date

4.7 Project type (for example, community solar, rooftop solar, storage, efficiency retrofit, other) and brief description of no more than two or three sentences.

4.8 Community benefit. Describe what the project delivers to the community it serves, and who receives that benefit.

Section 5. Equity Eligible Contractor Status and Project Siting

Definitions of terms Equity Eligible Contractors (EEC) and Equity Investment Eligible Communities (EIEC) are outlined in the Illinois Energy Transition Act. If you are unsure whether either applies to you or the contractor or developer that will be delivering the project, answer “not sure” rather than guessing, and CEJJF will follow up.

5.1 An Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC) is a business majority owned by Equity Eligible Persons (EEP), a nonprofit or cooperative majority governed by equity eligible persons, or a person who is an equity eligible person offering personal services as an independent contractor.

An Equity Eligible Person is a graduate of or participant in a CEJA workforce training program, a graduate of or person currently in the foster care system, a person who was formerly incarcerated, or a person whose primary residence is in an Equity Investment Eligible Community.

Is the organization an IPA-certified Equity Eligible Contractor (EEC) or, if you are a community-based organization or municipality, is the contractor or developer delivering the project an EEC?

Yes No Not sure

5.2 If the organization has not been granted formal EEC status by IPA, check any category below that describes the organization or the contractor or developer delivering the project.

A business majority owned by one or more Equity Eligible Persons

A nonprofit or cooperative majority governed by Equity Eligible Persons

A natural person who is an Equity Eligible Person offering personal services as an independent contractor

None of these apply

5.3 Is the project sited in an Equity Investment Eligible Community? If you are unsure, please review the Equity Investment Eligible Community map at energyequity.illinois.gov/resources/equity-investment-eligible-community-map.html.

Yes No Unsure

5.4 Address used to determine the community designation, if different from the project address at 4.2

Section 6. Bridge Request

Loans under the pilot are ordinarily made in amounts from $100,000 to $200,000, and will not exceed the first tranche of your DCEO award. Tell us your true need up to the first tranche of DCEO payments, and CEJJF will discuss sizing with you if you are invited to apply.

6.1 Loan amount requested

6.2 Total anticipated predevelopment budget for the project

6.3 Total amount requested from DCEO for this project

6.4 Date by which you need the funds

6.5 Are there deadlines driving that date? Describe them and give the date of each. Examples include an interconnection or transmission queue position, expiring site control, an expiring permit or entitlement, or an offtake or incentive deadline.

Section 7. Access to Capital

CEJJF prioritizes borrowers facing historical and structural barriers to conventional financing. CEJJF is requesting this information so it can understand the terms on which credit has been available to you. A short or limited credit history does not count against you.

Please note that the pilot bridge loan does not require a personal guarantee.

7.1 List the organization's three largest credit facilities.

Examples of facility types include a bank line of credit, term loan, SBA loan, or business credit card.

FACILITY 1

Type of facility

Limit or balance (estimate)

Rate (estimate)

Required a personal guarantee? Yes No

FACILITY 2

Type of facility

Limit or balance (estimate)

Rate (estimate)

Required a personal guarantee? Yes No

FACILITY 3

Type of facility

Limit or balance (estimate)

Rate (estimate)

Required a personal guarantee? Yes No

7.2 If any facility listed above has available capacity that you are not using for this predevelopment work, what prevents you from drawing it? Describe the timing, covenant, collateral, or other constraint.

Section 8. Grant Administration and Compliance Experience

8.1 Apart from the EEF or CSES award described in Section 3, which of the following describes the organization? Check every one that applies.

- Current or prior DCEO grantee, excluding this pending grant award
- Prior recipient of another State of Illinois grant
- Prior recipient of a federal grant
- No prior grant administration history

8.2 List up to the three largest grants the organization has administered in the last three years, excluding the pending EEF or CSES award described in Section 3.

Estimates are okay at this stage. If you have not received any grants, please write not applicable.

GRANT 1

Grantor

Program

Amount

GRANT 2

Grantor

Program

Amount

GRANT 3

Grantor

Program

Amount

8.3 If the organization has no grant administration history, describe any comparable experience managing a contract, a draw schedule, or documented reporting obligations.

Section 9. Partnership and References

9.1 Has the organization worked with CEJJF or DCEO before? If yes, describe the relationship.

Section 10. Other Applications

CEJJF will make one loan per entity under the pilot, but you are welcome to apply for more than one project. Submitting more than one application does not count against you.

10.1 Does the organization, or any entity under common ownership, have another application pending in this pilot?

Yes No

10.2 If yes, name the other project or projects and the entity submitting each.

Section 11. Certification

I certify that I am authorized to submit this application on behalf of the organization named in Section 2, and that the information in it is true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I understand that this is an application to participate in the pilot loan program and not a loan application, that an invitation to the pilot is not a credit decision and does not commit CEJJF to making a loan, and that CEJJF may verify any information provided here.

ELECTRONIC SIGNATURE

DATE

PRINTED NAME AND TITLE

Typing your name above constitutes your electronic signature and has the same effect as a handwritten signature.

Section 12. Confidentiality and Reporting

CEJJF uses the information in this application to evaluate it and to administer the pilot. CEJJF shares it internally and with consultants, counsel, and auditors who require it for that purpose. CEJJF does not otherwise disclose an applicant's financial information.