



Call for Partners for USEPA Clean Ports Program

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency

Released: Tuesday, March 26, 2024

Deadline to Submit Questions: Friday, April 5, 2024, 12 p.m. Central Time

**If Warranted, FAQ Document Will Be Posted by:
Monday, April 8, 12 p.m. Central Time**

Proposals Due: Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 5:00 p.m. Central Time

Overview

The Inflation Reduction Act of 2022 provides the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) with \$3 billion to fund zero-emission port equipment and infrastructure, as well as climate and air quality planning at U.S. ports.

The USEPA has announced two separate Notices of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs) to disburse the allocated \$3 billion - the *Zero-Emission Technology Deployment Competition* and the *Climate and Air Quality Planning Competition*.

The two NOFOs will be used to fund approximately \$2.8 billion in zero-emission technology deployment at ports, as well as approximately \$150 million for climate and air quality planning. Both NOFOs are open now, until the application deadline at 11:59 PM Eastern on May 28, 2024. USEPA anticipates notifying selectees by September 2024 and awarding the grants by December 2024. More information on the USEPA's Clean Ports Program (Clean Ports) can be found here: <https://www.epa.gov/ports-initiative/cleanports>.

Given the unprecedented level of funding in this sector and the one-time nature of this funding, IEPA is issuing this notice with the objective to work with private entities and other parties to apply for the NOFOs under this program. IEPA may apply for both implementation and/or planning funding based on the proposals received from this notice. Whether IEPA may act as a lead applicant or a Statutory Partner for either of these NOFOs is not yet determined.

As such, with this Call for Partners (CFP), IEPA is seeking interest from qualified and eligible public and private organizations interested in partnering with IEPA on Clean Ports efforts. This could include one or both of the following:

- 1) Parties interested in partnering on a planning application.
- 2) Parties interested in partnering on a deployment application.
 - a. Those interested in IEPA acting as a Statutory Partner.
 - b. Those interested in IEPA leading an application and the party potentially acting as a subrecipient.

Interested parties should review the applicable Clean Ports NOFO(s) in their entirety before responding to this IEPA CFP. This solicitation does not require IEPA to select any Partners solicited through this process. IEPA may pursue any projects solicited through this Call for Partners, any other projects, or none at all.

Proposals are due to EPA.EVCharging@Illinois.gov by Wednesday, April 10, 2024, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time.

Program Background

Clean Ports Program goals:

- Build a foundation for the port sector to transition over time to fully zero-emissions operations, positioning ports to serve as a catalyst for transformational change across the freight sector.
- Reduce diesel pollution (criteria pollutants, GHGs, and air toxics) in near-port communities.
- Help ensure that meaningful community engagement and emissions reduction planning are port industry standard practices.

IEPA efforts in this sector are supported by the state's comprehensive energy legislation, the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, which:

- Incentivizes renewable energy development
- Accelerates electric vehicle (EV) adoption and expands charging station infrastructure
- Creates statewide clean energy workforce training programs to ensure our workforce is prepared for the jobs of the future
- Equitably supports communities facing energy transitions and much more

Eligible Projects

The Zero Emission Technology Deployment Competition is designed to fund deployment of strategies and solutions that will help ports achieve zero-emission operations. This includes funding the purchase of ZE equipment, technologies, and related infrastructure directly serving a port, as well as funding support expenses related to deployment. More specifics about eligible technology is available in the Zero Emission Technology Deployment Competition NOFO¹.

The Climate and Air Quality Planning Competition is designed to fund climate and air quality planning activities focused on one or more ports that fall under the categories of (1) emissions inventory and accounting exercises, (2) strategy analysis and goalsetting, (3) stakeholder collaboration and communication, and (4) resilience planning. The USEPA NOFO provides examples of the types of activities within the categories for which applicants may choose to seek funding under the NOFO².

Required Documents

Proposals from any qualified and eligible entities interested in partnering with IEPA for either NOFO under this Clean Ports program shall be no more than five pages total, excluding any maps/photos addenda.

¹ <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-02/2024-clean-ports-ze-tech-deploymt-competition-2024-02.pdf>

² <https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2024-02/2024-clean-ports-caqp-competition-2024-02.pdf>

Interested parties should submit information on specific project(s), including but not necessarily limited to:

- Scope
- Location
- Anticipated timelines
- Estimated Costs
 - Requested federal amount
 - Any non-federal match and proposed source
- Outreach/engagement efforts performed to date supporting the project(s)
- Any emissions reductions estimates/previous planning efforts (not counted in five-page limit)

Application Documents needed for this Call for Partners:

- Letter of Partnership on organization letterhead stipulating the contact information of the organization’s project lead
- Partnership Proposal detailing:
 - Roles and Responsibilities
 - Interest in this Clean Ports program and electrification efforts in general
 - Any past/current electrification planning efforts
 - Any past/current electrification implementation efforts
 - Grant-writing experience support your organization can bring to the Partnership
- Tentative Statutory Partnership Agreement, if applicable
- Documentation of how your application meets the evaluation criteria below

Evaluation

Evaluation for this Call for Partners shall be based on the following criteria:

- Federal Eligibility (including SAM.gov registration)
- Completeness of proposal
- Likelihood of project success based on factors such as experience of project team and division of roles and responsibilities
- Demonstrated ability to provide matching funds
- Availability of grant-writing capacity and other resources

Scoring for submissions will include a component that will follow the Clean Ports scoring criteria. Those categories are below. See the Clean Ports NOFOs for more information.

Planning

Category	Points
Project Summary and Approach	29
Environmental Results – Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures	20
Programmatic Capability and Past Performance	8

Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities	23
Project Sustainability	5
Workforce Development	5
Budget	20
Total Possible Points	110

Deployment

Category	Points
Project Summary and Approach	42
Environmental Results – Outcomes, Outputs and Performance Measures	25
Programmatic Capability and Past Performance	15
Environmental Justice and Disadvantaged Communities	23
Project Sustainability	10
Job Quality and Equitable Workforce Development	10
Project Resilience to Climate Impacts	5
Budget	20
Total Possible Points	150

Questions

Please submit any questions at your earliest convenience to EPA.EVCharging@Illinois.gov. The deadline to submit questions is 12 p.m. Central Time on Friday, April 5, 2024.

If warranted, an FAQ Document will be posted by 12 p.m. Central Time on Monday, April 8, 2024, at this link: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/air-quality/driving-a-cleaner-illinois.html>

Submission

Applicants should not submit any sensitive information. Applications may be a public record to the extent required by law.

Interested Partners shall submit their application to EPA.EVCharging@Illinois.gov by Wednesday, April 10, 2024, by 5:00 p.m. Central Time.

Subsequent Steps

IEPA anticipates forming a committee comprised of employees from multiple state agencies to complete a review of any proposals received from this CFP. That committee will meet within one week of the close of this CFP to determine which, if any, proposals the State of Illinois will be advancing onto the federal application portion of this process.

IEPA may request additional information from applicants throughout the review process.

If a potential Partner is chosen to advance to the federal application round, the Partner will be involved in the application process.

Additional Information

Selection through this CFP is not a guarantee of funding, but instead indicates that the selected Partner may proceed in competitive grant proposal(s) to USEPA. Funding is contingent on any USEPA award(s) and conditions surrounding any award(s). IEPA will work in conjunction with any selected Partner to refine the proposal(s) based on components that are needed for a Clean Ports application which IEPA may submit. Selected Partner(s) will have an opportunity to re-confirm their commitment/participation prior to IEPA submitting any grant applications.

As applicable, any applicant entity will be required to comply with federal, state, or local laws, regulations, and other requirements and be required to obtain all necessary permits and clearances.