

# RESOLUTION 25-1014

**LICENSE AGREEMENT TO USE SPACE AT 649 S RIVER STREET FOR  
CEJA WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT HUB**

## Ordinance Summary

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- License agreement allows College of DuPage and 548 Foundation to use space at 649 S River Street (former Public Works Water & Sewer building) for training and education
- We have been working to upgrade bathrooms to make them ADA-accessible
- Monthly charges to cover rent and utilities
- February 1-June 30, 2026, with intention to renew annually
- City is not obligated to provide additional financial assistance for this project, however, we will provide support (promotion, partnerships) as it meets Economic Development and Sustainability goals



# CEJA Workforce Development Hub



# What is CEJA?

Climate

Equitable

Jobs

Act

- ✓ September 2021 – The Climate & Equitable Jobs Act is historic legislation that passed and will help Illinois transition to 100% clean energy by 2050.
  - Incentivizes renewable energy development
  - Accelerates EV adoption & expands charging station infrastructure
  - Creates statewide clean energy workforce training programs to ensure our workforce is prepared for the job of the future
  - Equitably supports communities facing energy transitions & more
- ✓ Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) allocating **\$180,000,000/annually** to workforce & community programs like the CEJA Workforce Hubs Program

CEJA AURORA Workforce Hub is 1 of 13 hubs across Illinois

# About College of DuPage



## CEJA Bridge Program 2026 Cohort Dates

Monday, Jan. 12 to Friday, Feb. 27

Monday, March 9 to Friday, April 24

Monday, May 14 to Friday, June 19

## Offerings

Introduction to Sustainable and Clean Energy

Basic Safety and First Aid Certifications

NCCER Core Construction Certification

Electrical Basics

Essential Skills

<https://www.cod.edu/academics/continuing-education/career-professional-training/climate-equitable-jobs.html>



# About College of DuPage



# About 548 Foundation



- Mission is to transform communities through education, empowerment, and innovation to make sustainability *accessible to all*
- Founded in 2019 by A.J. Patton
- A.J. grew up in unit 548 of a public housing project in Terre Haute, Indiana—an address that now inspires the name and mission of the **548 Foundation**.
- As a child, his family struggled to make ends meet. He remembers a time when a \$400 gas bill meant no heat and boiling water for baths for over a year. *“That sticks with you,”* AJ says. *“It’s why I’m committed to **lowering utility bills with clean energy.**”*
- The sustainable energy workforce education program helps individuals in need of a second chance gain the skills to rebuild their neighborhoods.

<https://548foundation.org/>





# About 548 Foundation







# PARTNERSHIPS

- CEJA collaborates with multiple regional community colleges:

- College of DuPage
- Waubonsee Community College
- Elgin Community College
- Harper College
- Triton College
- Kishwaukee



- Recruitment – Goodwill & Kane County Sheriff's Office





# KEY TRAINING AREAS

- OSHA-10, CPR, & First Aid Training
- Construction trades, including Hand & Power skills
- Solar installer training
- Energy Auditor roles

## Sample Program Structure

- Training is 180 hours of content, runs 5 hours a day every 7 weeks
- Bridge Training

# WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



## WHO?

Assist individuals from Environmental Justice communities, returning citizens, displaced energy workers, foster care members/graduates & those facing general employment barriers.

## SUPPORT

- All qualified CEJA participants are eligible to receive \$13 for each hour of training, allowing students to focus on their careers.
- Services offered: Childcare, transportation assistance, food support, helping students stay focused on their learning, and follow-up support post graduation.



# CITY OF AURORA & CEJA

CEJA is seeking to rent a space to serve as a workforce hub. Their current facilities do not have adequate space to expand the program.

- ❑ Classroom space(s) to accommodate 12-20 students
- ❑ Office Space for staff
- ❑ Storage for existing supplies, tools, PPE, etc.
- ❑ Workshop / Lab Space

City of Aurora has identified the former Aurora Public Works building on **649 S River St** to be the CEJA Aurora Workforce Hub. This building is currently unoccupied and being used as storage.



## BENEFITS

- The CEJA program provides direct, tangible benefits to residents through job training and career opportunities in the growing clean energy sector.
- Strengthens the city's position as a leader in sustainable development, environmental justice, and business opportunity.



# CITY OF AURORA & CEJA



## LOCAL WORKFORCE

- Power Construction hiring CEJA graduates for the Habitat Green Freedom SMART Community on Jericho Road.
- Progressive Solutions likely to hire 548 Foundation to do solar installation at new Public Works building



# SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2019



The City of Aurora and CEJA Aurora Workforce Hub partnership supports and advanced the City of Aurora's long-term sustainability and economic development goals.

## GOALS ACCOMPLISHING

### FOCUS AREA 02

#### Community Development & Land Use

- ✓ Promote smart growth by promoting local and sustainable development that will reuse existing infrastructures and buildings
- ✓ Use appropriate and dedicated vacant or abandoned properties for business incubator space

### FOCUS AREA 03

#### Education & Engagement

- ✓ The City of Aurora actively engages its diverse group of citizens on the benefits of sustainable development & practices
- ✓ Collaborate to assure equitable access to sustainability education in the community by engaging public schools, profit and not for profit organizations

### FOCUS AREA 05

#### Environmental Justice

- ✓ The City of Aurora will ensure that all neighborhoods & regions in the city will have access to sustainable development opportunities
- ✓ Support & encourage better connections between all residents, particularly those in need, and profit or not-for-profit organizations to ensure high quality essential human services are available and utilized

### FOCUS AREA 06

#### Resilient Community

- ✓ Create a community that is well prepared for disaster
- ✓ Encourage residents and businesses to contribute their time and resources to sustain the community





# LONG TERM GOALS



- ✓ Help entrepreneurs establish clean energy businesses
- ✓ Help create a pipeline of small businesses that focus on clean energy projects and solutions
- ✓ Help establish Aurora as a hub for clean energy business opportunity and education

## PHASE 1

### SUMMER 2025

- Discussions with CEJA began to secure permanent training space
- City staff identified 649 S. River Street, previously unused facility formerly used as Aurora Water & Sewage Maintenance
- Identified additional partners, 548 Foundation joined the project
- Initial Renovations – ADA-compliant bathroom remodel to prepare the site for its first students and staff
- Introduction of C-PACE financing program
- January 20, 2026 – Aurora CEJA Workforce Development Hub Launch Event
- CEJA Bridge Program Cohort begins!

## PHASE 2

### WINTER 2026

- Expansion
  - Additional classroom, bathroom & workshop space buildout to increase student capacity
  - Additional ADA compliance
  - Grants and donated labor
- 548 Foundation Cohort begins!

## PHASE 3

### LONG-TERM VISION

- Business Incubator –
  - Job creation strategy centered on contractor training and business incubation with a target of 30% workforce placement
- Community Education –
  - Foster partnerships with school districts and higher educational institutions to offer advanced energy modeling and integrated architecture courses
  - Learning Center to observe energy efficiency technologies in action within homes and buildings

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## CEJA Energy Efficiency Learning Lab

\*funding to be used to develop a third, user-ready classroom (blue) that can also be used as a mock-up of a 'home' designed to provide the learner with a more realistic training opportunity.

Alternative space within the warehouse is also available for a build out of a more comprehensive lab space (see Red).





# QUESTIONS?

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