

To: Members of the Illinois Finance Authority
From: Chris Meister, Executive Director
Date: December 10, 2024
Subject: Executive Director Message

This Month's Transactions

New Business Items for consideration and approval this month include bond resolutions on behalf of *Provident Group–UIC Grenshaw Parking Properties LLC* and *Noble Network of Charter Schools*.

Also on the agenda today is our annual Resolution of Intent requesting an initial allocation of calendar year 2025 private activity bond volume cap in an aggregate amount not to exceed \$300 million, and a Resolution regarding the appointment of an Assistant Secretary.

The Bond Buyer Deal of the Year Awards

I would also like to once again congratulate Brad Fletcher on *The University of Chicago* transaction, which was named The Bond Buyer's Midwest Region Deal of the Year last month. The successful closing of the largest transaction in the history of the Authority would not have been possible without the partnership of *The University of Chicago* and its Associate Vice President for Finance, Jennie Huang Bennett, *RBC Capital Markets, LLC*, and all members of the transaction team.

We would also like to congratulate longtime Authority partners such as Chapman and Cutler LLP, Mayer Brown LLP, and Katten Muchin Rosenman LLP who also won The Bond Buyer's Deal of the Year awards for Innovative Financing with a \$3.2 billion Brightline transaction, and for Health Care Financing with a \$287 million transaction for Westchester Medical Center.

Brad and I are thankful to have been able to attend The Bond Buyer Deal of the Year awards gala on December 3 in New York.

New Executive Assistant

We welcome our new Executive Assistant, Erin O'Leary, who joined us on November 18. Erin is a recent graduate from Centre College in Kentucky, working in multiple leadership positions such as a Program Manager for the College's Bonner Program, a network of 60 students dedicated to alleviating poverty and improving education through active community service and civic engagement. Erin will be involved with a variety of administrative duties across all Authority departments.

Clean and Equitable Jobs and Justice Fund (CEJFF) Executive Director

I would like to congratulate Rebeccah Sanders for being appointed the first Executive Director of the CEJFF, created through the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) to ensure that the clean energy transition benefits all communities equitably. Rebeccah has extensive experience in environmental and civic leadership, and the Authority is looking forward to working with her and the CEJFF in the future.

Attachments:

Attachment A – Clean and Equitable Jobs and Justice Fund



Clean Energy Jobs
AND **Justice Fund**

For Immediate Release

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The Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund Welcomes Rebecca Sanders as Executive Director

The Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund board of directors has appointed Rebecca Sanders as the nonprofit's first executive director. Sanders will lead the newly established green bank, which aims to use innovative financing tools to make energy efficiency upgrades and small-scale renewable energy systems more attainable for homeowners and businesses. The organization will also focus on advancing workforce development initiatives, with a special emphasis on supporting minority-owned businesses.

"I firmly believe that all communities, especially those often left behind, stand to benefit immensely from advancements in clean energy," said Memuna Lee, board chair and sourcing consultant at Country Financial. "CEJF will play a crucial role in making these solutions more accessible, driving both positive environmental and economic impacts for everyone."

Sanders brings a diverse background in the arts, civic and environmental sectors. Most recently, she served as the chief executive officer for the Natural Resources Council of Maine, focusing on clean energy, environmental conservation and sustainable communities. Her leadership roles include serving as the executive director of the Chicago Cultural Alliance to strengthen the city's vibrant cultural communities and the National Audubon Society, where she launched the Great Lakes program and oversaw conservation and climate initiatives across 39 states.

"I'm thrilled to step into this role and advance this important work," said Sanders. "We have a once-in-a-century opportunity to transform our state's economy toward sustainability and equity from the ground up. Our mission is about more than advancing renewable technologies and energy efficiency — it's about creating good jobs, empowering minority-owned businesses and cultivating thriving communities."

CEJF was created through the Illinois Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, a landmark piece of legislation aimed at positioning Illinois as a national leader in climate action. CEJA prioritizes equity and justice in the clean energy transition by creating opportunities for underrepresented communities, ensuring that the economic benefits — such as job creation and business opportunities — are shared equitably.

“CEJF will help Illinois make real progress toward a more sustainable and equitable future,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “The Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, which established CEJF, laid the foundation for addressing the disproportionate impacts of the climate crisis on low-income communities while ensuring they receive economic benefits from clean energy innovation. It’s about leveling the playing field and making sure that everyone has the chance to be part of our greener economy.”

Under Sanders’ leadership and with an engaged board of directors, CEJF will focus on building partnerships that help deploy financing programs for energy efficiency and renewable energy upgrades. The organization will work closely with the communities it serves, allowing them to thrive as active participants in the clean energy transition. CEJF contracts with Public Sector Consultants, a nonpartisan public policy research and consulting firm, for staffing and management services. PSC has a proven track record of supporting energy financing initiatives, including helping establish green banks in Michigan, Indiana and Washington state. For more information or to sign up for updates, visit cleanenergyjobsjustice.org.

