

Illinois Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund Welcomes Van Ikner as Director of Engagement and Partnerships

Ikner will direct equity-focused clean energy investments across Illinois

CHICAGO, IL, UNITED STATES, July 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund ([CEJF](#)) today announced the appointment of [Van Ikner](#) as director of engagement and partnerships. In this role, he will direct equity-focused clean energy investments across Illinois with a focus on historically underserved regions throughout the state.

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Rebecca Sanders, executive director of the Fund.

CEJF is Illinois’ nonprofit green bank created 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. CEJF helps homeowners and small businesses lower their energy costs and facilitates access to clean energy solutions for frontline communities, fostering healthier environments

and stronger local economies.

A natural bridge builder, Ikner brings extensive experience in listening, building trust and making systems more accessible for everyday people. He has held active roles on several boards and initiatives. Recently, he served as an engagement specialist with the NAACP Clean Energy Jobs Act Navigator Program, leading outreach and contractor engagement throughout southern Illinois. Ikner’s commitment to the community is also reflected in his position as a Jackson County board member for District 6, where he advocates for youth development, justice reform, environmental equity and rural infrastructure. Additionally, he provides his expertise on justice and equity policies as a member of the Citizens Advisory Board to the Jackson County State’s Attorney. Ikner has collaborated with organizations including Carbondale United, CHOICES, Centerstone, the Jackson Union Port Authority and the Southern Illinois Black Chamber of Commerce.

The hiring of Ikner, based in Carbondale, underscores the fund’s commitment to making clean energy accessible to all and ensuring its equitable distribution across the entire state.

"Van will play a crucial role in connecting communities from Lynwood to Cairo, and ensuring they benefit from clean energy advancements," said Rebecca Sanders, executive director of the Fund. "His ability to bring people together across geographic, racial and political divides will ensure we are making inroads in the communities that can benefit the most from the positive environmental and economic impacts of Illinois' nonprofit green bank."

"CEJF is a true example of what I've always believed: that climate solutions must also be community solutions," said Ikner. "I am excited to be part of this work that connects communities with clean energy opportunities and jobs through this innovative financial pathway and ensures everyone has access to the advantages of clean energy."



Van Ikner, director of engagement and partnerships for Illinois' nonprofit green bank, the Clean Energy Jobs and Justice Fund.

Incorporated in the state of Illinois as directed by the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act, CEJF is dedicated to fostering a sustainable future for all Illinois residents by making clean energy accessible to everyone while ensuring the equitable distribution of its benefits. The fund's innovative financing will provide opportunities and grants to minority business enterprises and contractors of color, as well as low-income, environmental justice and Black, Indigenous, and People of Color communities and the businesses that serve them. CEJF contracts with Public Sector Consultants (PSC), 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, visit cleanenergyjobsjustice.org.

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