

JOB DESCRIPTION

JOB TITLE: Chief External Affairs Officer
EMPLOYER: Illinois Finance Authority/Climate Bank
REPORTS TO: Executive Director
LOCATION: Chicago, IL

I. ILLINOIS FINANCE AUTHORITY (CLIMATE BANK) OVERVIEW

Do you want to use finance to combat climate change, promote equitable economic development and enhance the quality of life for all the people of Illinois? Do you have the motivation, work ethic, skills and grit to join a small, growing and talented team at the forefront of climate finance? The Illinois Finance Authority/Climate Bank (“IFA/CB”) needs motivated and hardworking professionals to maximize the impact of new federal funding and to better deliver existing financial products and services throughout the state of Illinois (the “State”). If this describes you, then apply to join the IFA/CB.

With respect to Climate Bank activities, the federal government has awarded IFA/CB more than \$300 million through multiple funding sources and federal agencies. This new federal funding is aligned with the State goal under the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (“CEJA”) to move Illinois to 100% clean energy by 2050 while creating good paying jobs and economic opportunity in an equitable manner. IFA/CB is now building the organization to effectively deploy these funds. The purpose of the Climate Bank is to accelerate the investment of private capital into clean energy projects in a manner reflective of the State’s geographic, racial, ethnic, gender, and income-level diversity.

With respect to public finance, IFA/CB is a nationally recognized conduit issuer in the tax-exempt financing market and the commercial property assessed clean energy (“Commercial PACE”) financing market. Such financing facilitates the funding of eligible projects by borrowers that create long-term economic value in communities throughout Illinois.

IFA/CB offers competitive benefits, including a 401(a) defined contribution retirement savings plan with matching contributions, comprehensive and competitive health, life and disability insurance and paid time off. IFA/CB employees are at-will employees subject to various State ethics requirements (such as revolving door prohibitions), but IFA/CB employees are not subject to the State Personnel Code. IFA/CB is an equal opportunity employer.

IFA/CB generates its own operating revenue and is not supported by State taxpayer or ratepayer appropriations. The IFA/CB meets publicly each month.

II. POSITION SUMMARY

IFA/CB currently seeks a dynamic and experienced individual to join our team as Chief External Affairs Officer. The ideal candidate will have deep knowledge of and established relationships among key stakeholders within the climate and clean energy coalitions, as well as organizations



relating to lenders, potential vendors, workforce and education, throughout Illinois. The candidate will possess a deep understanding of public policymakers across the federal, state, and local governmental landscape. Importantly, the successful candidate will have the aptitude and curiosity to learn Climate Bank and Public Finance financial products and then explain the importance and effectiveness of these products to stakeholders with varying knowledge levels. The Chief External Affairs Officer will lead our communications strategy and play a pivotal role in advancing IFA/CB's mission to effectively and equitably leverage federal funds with private capital to support clean energy products and initiatives across Illinois.

III. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Reports to the Executive Director and is a key member of the organization's senior leadership team.
2. Consistent with the Climate Bank's statutory purpose to accelerate the investment of private capital into clean energy projects in a manner reflecting the State's geographic, racial, ethnic, gender, and income-level diversity, this individual will have, develop, cultivate and maintain strong relationships with relevant coalitions and stakeholders throughout Illinois, including clean energy coalitions, environmental organizations, lenders, capital providers, vendors and their respective organizations, and education/workforce organizations (collectively, "stakeholder organizations"). Act as a primary point of contact to foster collaboration and communication with stakeholder organizations. Proactively engage with stakeholder organizations to enhance IFA/CB's visibility and promote partnership opportunities. Identify strategic opportunities for joint initiatives that align with IFA/CB's purpose and goals. Advise IFA/CB leadership on feedback from stakeholder organizations.
3. Lead legislative advocacy activities for IFA/CB before federal, State, and local legislative and regulatory bodies, specifically for the purpose of advancing the Climate Bank's mission with respect to CEJA goals. Collaborate with the legal team to develop policy and legislative strategies. Monitor and stay informed about the development of state and federal policies related to clean and renewable energy, climate action, and environmental sustainability. Provide strategic and day-to-day guidance to the Climate Bank on policy advocacy efforts and related timelines.
4. Provide a public voice on behalf of IFA/CB, corresponding with the media and members of the public to answer any questions that they may have and effectively communicate IFA/CB's mission. This position will also support IFA/CB's Freedom of Information Act responsibilities by providing timely responses to media inquiries and communicating information that advances the IFA/CB mission.
5. Recognizing the IFA/CB role as a finance-focused public organization, assist with promoting awareness of organization-wide efforts to ensure that projects and vendors reflect the State's geographic, racial, ethnic, gender, and income-level diversity.
6. It is anticipated that the ambition of the Climate Bank will attract philanthropic and other third-party funding. This individual will lead efforts to obtain such philanthropic funding for Climate Bank initiatives and purposes.



7. Federal grants to the Climate Bank require the leveraging and recycling of funds to meet equitable climate goals through finance. Additional sources of capital are essential to this process. This individual will assist efforts to identify and recruit other sources of capital to support Climate Bank projects, including but not limited to family offices and Community Development Financial Institutions (“CDFIs”).
8. Serve as the liaison between IFA/CB and its Advisory Committee (under development), ensuring effective communication, coordination of meetings, and dissemination of relevant information. Facilitate productive discussions and leverage committee expertise to inform Climate Bank and Public Finance initiatives.
9. Assist the Managing Director of Public Finance with marketing the Illinois Finance Authority PACE program to counties and municipalities and coordinating webinars and meetings with banks and underwriters regarding tax-exempt financing.
10. Provide support and guidance in the development, implementation, scaling, marketing, and deployment of Climate Bank financial products. Manage the promotion of Climate Bank Group financial products, including Solar for All, National Clean Investment Fund, State Small Business Credit Initiative, Energy Efficiency Revolving Loan Fund, Grid Resilience Grants, Charging and Fueling Infrastructure Grants, Resilient and Efficient Codes Implementation, Inflation Reduction Act Tax Credits, Opportunity Zones, and U.S. Department of Energy Loan Programs Office Funding.
11. Where necessary and appropriate, assist the State’s economic development objectives and coordinate with external affairs and legislative teams of the Office of the Governor and other government agencies.
12. Collaborate closely with key public and policy stakeholders, including state and local government officials, regulatory bodies, community leaders, lenders, capital providers, and the leaders of stakeholder organizations. Advocate for the Climate Bank’s initiatives and build consensus to overcome policy, legislative, industry, and regulatory hurdles.
13. Monitor Illinois and federal policy developments and anticipate potential obstacles that may impact the Climate Bank’s operations or reputation. Develop proactive strategies to effectively mitigate risks and navigate policy challenges.

IV. QUALIFICATIONS

1. To be successful, the candidate must possess the aptitude and interest in learning and implementing the diverse financial products and programs of the IFA/CB within the dynamic state, federal, local, not-for-profit, and for-profit environments. The candidate must be able to communicate the importance and effectiveness of these products to stakeholders with varying knowledge levels.
2. Bachelor’s degree from a four-year college/university. Bachelor’s degree in political science, environmental policy, public administration, or a related field and/or an advanced degree preferred.
3. Minimum of 5 years in a similar role, with a proven track record of building and maintaining relationships within the clean energy sector and navigating Illinois policy landscape.



4. Strong understanding of Illinois policy dynamics, legislative and regulatory environment and processes related to clean energy and environmental policies.
5. Excellent verbal and written communication skills, with the ability to effectively articulate complex issues and influence stakeholders at all levels. Confidence with public speaking, specifically with respect to providing authoritative information to policy makers, clean energy stakeholders, as well as potential clients and borrowers.
6. Strong professional communication and interpersonal skills and the ability to succinctly express complex ideas both orally and in writing with exceptional attention to detail.
7. Ability to anticipate policy challenges and develop proactive strategies to address them, minimizing reputational risks to IFA/CB.
8. Experience working collaboratively within a multidisciplinary team while fostering a culture of transparency, innovation, and accountability. Proficiency in managing multiple project-oriented tasks independently within a team environment.
9. Within a public environment, the individual will be trusted with confidential information. The individual must have the judgment, experience and discretion to handle such confidential information appropriately.
10. Strong working knowledge of Microsoft Office, including Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and Outlook is required. Experience using video conferencing platforms such as Teams, Zoom, and WebEx is also required. Familiarity with DocuWare, DocuSign, Nitro Pro and/or Adobe Acrobat software preferred.

Interested and qualified candidates must submit their resume and a one-page (approximately 500 words) cover letter to HR@il-fa.com.

The above is intended to describe the general content of and requirements for the performance of this job. It is not to be construed as an exhaustive statement of duties, responsibilities or physical requirements. Nothing in this job description restricts management's right to assign or reassign duties and responsibilities to this job at any time. Reasonable accommodations may be made to enable individuals with disabilities to perform the essential functions.

Last updated: 09/12/2024