



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Southeast Region Weekly Update August 27, 2021

It has been another very busy week for us at DCEO. The Back to Business grant program continues to move forward as we are receiving applications from around the state. Our team at DCEO and all the Community Navigators are working hard to get the word out on this program. Please feel free to share information on the program. Yesterday, Governor Pritzker issued a new Executive Order requiring all individuals in Illinois who are age two or over and able to medically tolerate a face covering (a mask or cloth face covering), regardless of vaccination status, to cover their nose and mouth with a face covering when in an indoor place effective Monday, August 30, 2021. Face coverings may be removed temporarily while actively eating or drinking (including in bars or restaurants), and may be removed by workers at workplaces when they can consistently maintain six feet of distance (such as when workers are in their office or cubicle space). While face coverings are not required outdoors, masks are strongly encouraged in crowded outdoor settings like festivals and concerts as well as for activities that require close contact with people who are not vaccinated. The EO also addresses vaccination requirements for certain groups personnel. DCEO will have an updated FAQ document shortly posted on our website [here](#). Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions and remember We're All In Illinois!

Back to Business Grant Program

The program is now accepting applications. DCEO along with our network of community navigator organizations are continuing to conduct outreach and provide technical assistance to help businesses with this program.

DCEO is making \$250 million available for small businesses across the state experiencing significant losses due to COVID-19 under this program. Businesses across multiple types and industries may apply to this program. Eligibility **is not** limited to priority areas or Disproportionately Impacted Areas. Businesses in the following industries will be given priority status for grants: restaurants and taverns; hotels; arts businesses and organizations; and more. Additionally, businesses located within Disproportionately Impacted Areas (DIAs) will be prioritized. Two main eligibility requirements include that the business must have been in operation during or before December 2019, and must have experienced a loss in revenue of at least \$5,000 in 2020 due to economic disruptions related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Click [here](#) for the full eligibility guidelines.

B2B seeks to restore operational losses incurred during the COVID-19 pandemic and will provide grants ranging in size from \$5,000-\$150,000, commensurate with the amount of losses experienced. To be considered for a grant, applicants must demonstrate a reduction in revenue in 2020 as compared with 2019, and annual revenues of no more than \$20 million in 2019. Businesses must also provide two bank statements, a business owner ID, and federal tax returns for 2019 and 2020. The application will be an on-line application and documents will need to be scanned so they can be uploaded as part of the application. The documentation needed includes the following:

- Business owner ID (ITIN business owners eligible)
- Business's 2019 **AND** 2020 Federal tax returns
- Two (2) business bank statements – one from the period April through December 2020, and most recent statement

All the information on this program including the application link and a FAQ document can be found on our website [here](#). We have also included recordings of webinars that were held this week on the program. DCEO has engaged the support of Community Navigator Organizations that are working in every region of the state to provide technical assistance to businesses, with a focus on underserved businesses including minority, rural, veteran and women-owned businesses. **Find your community outreach partner including navigators, SBDCs, as well as DCEO Support Teams with the [B2B search tool](#) or view the list by [name](#), [county](#), or [language service](#).** Visit www.ilbusinessalliance.com

Team RED Office hours

DCEO's Regional Economic Development Team is hosting weekly office hours on the days and times listed below. These sessions are designed as open times that the Team is available. The Team will provide you with the latest updates and answer any questions you may have on state or federal programs including providing assistance with the **Back to Business Program**. Feel free to drop in for any assistance you need. If these times do not work for you, please reach out to your regional Team RED representative. We're always here to help.

Mondays from 3pm – 4pm. Click on this [link](#) to join.

Wednesdays from 1pm – 2pm. Click on this [link](#) to join.

Thursdays from 3pm – 4pm. Click on this [link](#) to join.

Fridays from 10am – 11am. Click on this [link](#) to join.

American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPA) for Non-entitlement Units (NEU) of Local Government – Deadline to apply is September 30, 2021

The portal is now open for the more than 1,250 small cities, towns and villages across Illinois that have not already received aid from the federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to apply for their share of more than \$742 million in federal funds. The money can be used to cover expenses incurred while responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. To assist these local governments as they claim their allotments, the State of Illinois has established a website portal at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/CURENEU/Pages/default.aspx>. Authorized community representatives can access the portal now to certify and request their allotment within minutes. Municipalities completing the portal submission, including all of the documentation required by U.S. Treasury, can expect to receive half of their funding in approximately 30 days with the remaining half roughly a year later. The deadline for municipalities to apply for funding is **September 30, 2021** and there will be no other opportunity for municipalities to apply for later distributions.

Eligible local governments include cities, towns and villages serving populations of less than 50,000, that did not receive direct aid from ARPA. These smaller, so-called non-entitlement units of local government (NEUs), are being allocated funds they can use to cover revenue losses and the costs of responding to the COVID-19 public health emergency or to its negative economic impacts on households, small businesses, impacted industries, essential workers, and the communities hardest-hit by the crisis. These funds can also be used to invest in building, maintaining, or upgrading water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure. For more information about the program, please visit the website at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/CURENEU/Pages/default.aspx>. The website

also contains numerous technical assistance documents including a “How-To” presentation on using the portal, a Q&A document, and eligible uses of funds. We’ll be having more webinars on this program in the near future. I’ll keep you posted on when those events are going to be held. Information from the past webinars is posted on our website [here](#). In the meantime, the NEU Support Team is hosting [Virtual Office Hours](#)! Please join us if you have a question about registering on the NEU Portal or other general program questions. The next Office Hours are scheduled for August 30th @10-11am CST.

Upcoming September Webinars from the Regional Economic Development Team

The Regional Economic Development Team is continuing to offer a variety of webinars to provide information to all our partners. Below is a list of the webinars planned for July and August. Please feel free to share this information with anyone who may be interested in these topics.

Enterprise Zone Overview

Date and time: Wednesday, September 1, 2021 2:00 pm Central Standard Time

Please join the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity Regional Economic Development for an overview of the Illinois Enterprise Zone Program and the benefits to businesses within the zone. Click [here](#) to register for this event.

Presented by Adrian Madunic, Northwest Region Manager and Kim Watson, Southern Region Account Manager Office of Regional Economic Development, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Financing Your Small Business

Date and Time: Wednesday, September 8, 2021 at 2:00 pm Central Standard Time

Are you looking for ways to obtain financing for your small business? Join DCEO’s Team RED, Central Illinois SBDC and a panel of business experts to discuss ways to finance your small business. The discussion will include programs and opportunities that are available and how you need to prepare to take advantage of the programs. Click [here](#) to register for this event.

Presented by Aly Grady, Central Region Manager, Office of Regional Economic Development, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and Kevin Lust, Central Illinois SBDC.

Advantage Illinois Loan Program for Small Businesses

Date and time: Wednesday, September 15, 2021 11:00 pm Central Standard Time

Please join the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's Office of Regional Economic Development for a webinar to learn more about the Advantage Illinois Loan Program. This program enhances capital for Illinois businesses, which is a top priority. By working with the state’s banking community and venture capitalists, DCEO will help entrepreneurs and small businesses start-up, expand, and create new jobs at a faster rate. Click [here](#) to register for this event.

Presented by Sal Garza, West Central Region Manager, Office of Regional Economic Development, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Local CURE Support Program

Local Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency (Local CURE) Support Program Important Update: For local governments which still have funds available, the Local CURE statute has been updated and **now permits costs to be incurred from March 1, 2020 through December 31, 2021**. Local governments with unclaimed funds under the program should review the program's list of allowable expenditures located on the Local CURE web page and review the program's manual in order to make the most of the program's funds.

NOTE: This announcement is unrelated to communities awaiting dollars being provided by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which allow for revenue replacement. Local CURE dollars are from the CARES Act and still require that the local government be reimbursed for costs related to mitigating COVID-19, like public safety payroll and public health expenditures.

DCEO is continuing to work with our communities across the state to submit their reimbursable expenses related to COVID-19. It's not too late to submit expenses. **The deadline to submit reimbursable costs has been extended to January 31, 2022.** DCEO has posted information on our website [here](#). The website also has some good Q&A documents that can help with determining if an expense is eligible for reimbursement. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can also reach out to our partner at LocalCURE@crowe.com and we will get back to you.

Small Business Administration PPP Forgiveness Portal

The SBA has launched a streamlined application portal to allow borrowers with Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans of \$150,000 or less through participating lenders to apply for forgiveness directly through the SBA. Lenders are required to opt-in to this program through <https://directforgiveness.sba.gov>. In addition to the technology platform, the SBA is standing up a PPP customer service team to answer questions and directly assist borrowers with their forgiveness applications. Borrowers that need assistance or have questions should call (877) 552-2692, Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. CST.

Small Business Administration Program: Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL)

The SBA is offering low-interest federal disaster loans for working capital to small businesses and non-profit organizations that are suffering substantial economic injury as a result of COVID-19. These loans may be used to pay debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that can't be paid because of the disaster's impact, and that are not already covered by a Paycheck Protection Program loan. The interest rate is 3.75% for small businesses and 2.75% for non-profits. The first payment is deferred for one year. The deadline to apply for this program has been extended to December 31, 2021. The SBA has also extended deferment periods for all disaster loans including EIDL until 2022. For more information and the application, please click [here](#) to go to the SBA's website.

Tourism Attractions & Festivals Grant Program

Governor JB Pritzker and DCEO announced a new \$10 million grants program this week aimed at revitalizing the hard-hit tourism industry by bringing back new and returning tourism attractions and festivals to our state. The Tourism Attractions and Festivals Grant program is made possible with support of federal dollars from the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) and is part of a broader effort underway by the Pritzker administration to help reinvigorate

tourism in Illinois and to put the industry on a path to economic recovery from COVID-19.

Through a Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) issued, tourism and festival businesses and entities can submit for grants of up to \$1 million that may be used to establish and enhance tourism attractions or festivals planned for this year or next. **Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until funds are depleted with awards made quarterly and the department will have the ability to fund applications most closely aligned to eligibility criteria approved for immediate funding.** To view the NOFO, please visit <https://bit.ly/3fRxKgN>.

The Tourism Attraction and Festivals Grant program will help develop new or enhance existing tourism attractions located across the state – including but not limited to museums, businesses, events, performances, and festivals. To maximize the impact of the program, DCEO will utilize ARPA federal recovery dollars to provide grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$1 million and will require a local match. The goal of the program is to attract additional visitors and overnight stays that will bring foot traffic back in communities across Illinois.

Eligible applicants include units of local government, municipalities, county, not-for-profit and for-profit organizations, or local promotions groups. The funds may be utilized for capital projects, equipment, training, transportation, housing, receptions, entertainment, photography, temporary housing, and interpretive programs, like exhibits and installations - to further develop new attractions and events to attract visitors to Illinois. In turn, these grants will result in increased visitor spending in local communities, generating revenue and creating jobs for Illinoisans. Proposed attractions and festivals must demonstrate how this award will help businesses in the surrounding area and will be evaluated based on marketing value and ability to attract visitors for overnight stays. Projects will score higher based on proximity to commercial corridors and services - including hotels/motels, restaurants, retail, and other commercial operations. Attractions include but are not limited to: museums and cultural centers; theme/amusement parks; outdoor activities and recreation sites; and other facilities or businesses that attract or serve visitors.

Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) recently announced the launch of the new Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program, leveraging a \$10 million commitment from the State to provide additional training programs that will expand the talent pipeline while boosting diversity within the construction industry and building trades. A Notice of Funding Opportunity ([NOFO](#)) released by the DCEO Illinois Works Office aims to expand access to training programs that will prepare residents for well-paying jobs in the trades – with plans to focus on reducing barriers to entry and increasing representation of women and people of color in these fields. DCEO is now accepting applications for grant proposals– to view the NOFO, please visit [DCEO's website](#).

Through the Pre-Apprenticeship Program, DCEO and the Office of Illinois Works aim to create a network of providers across the state to recruit, prescreen, and provide pre-apprenticeship skills training. More importantly, providers will structure pathways and manage the program graduates' transition from the pre-apprenticeship program to a full apprenticeship program in construction and building trades. DCEO estimates that pre-apprenticeship training programs supported by these grant funds will serve as many as 1,000 participants during the first program year. Participants of the program will attend tuition-free and receive a stipend and other supportive services to help overcome systemic barriers to entering the construction industry. Upon completion of the program, pre-apprentices will receive industry aligned certifications which will prepare and qualify them to continue to a full-time apprenticeship program in one of the trades.

Eligible applicants include non-profit, community-based organizations, such as colleges, industry associations, chambers of commerce, local workforce areas, community colleges, technical schools, and school districts. Grants awards will range from \$200,000-\$550,000 for a one-year agreement. With pre-apprenticeship training programs lasting three to four months on average, the State of Illinois aims to award funds and launch training programs that will put more residents on the job site in time for the spring 2022 construction season. **The deadline for the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program is October 4, 2021.** Informational webinars will be held on August 12, August 19, August 26 and September 9 to help prepare organizations applying for training dollars. For more information on the Illinois Works program, please visit <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ilworkspreapprenticeshipnofo2021>.

Apprenticeship Expansion Program 2021 Notice of Funding Opportunity

In June 2021, Illinois received a *State Apprenticeship Expansion, Equity and Innovation Grant* for approximately \$6 million from the U.S. Department of Labor (USDOL) to develop, modernize and diversify Registered Apprenticeships in Illinois. The objective of this Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is to diversify apprenticeship programs and find innovative ways of employing the apprenticeship model to meet the needs of businesses, resulting in a total of 750 new registered apprenticeship programs by the end of 2024. It is Illinois' goal to use this NOFO to increase apprenticeship opportunities for historically underrepresented populations, including but not limited to: individuals with disabilities; youth from underserved communities; older workers; returning citizens from incarceration; and workers in jobs that have been severely impacted by COVID, such as the Arts, Entertainment, Recreation and Hospitality industries. This NOFO supports the Governor's priority of expanding apprenticeship opportunities in Illinois.

The Apprenticeship Expansion Program design is centered on supporting businesses and individuals. Expanding apprenticeships helps businesses with their current and future workforce needs as well as individuals with a career pathway, which includes work-based learning. Commerce will accept proposals that expand registered apprenticeships in Illinois. This may include projects that serve youth, adults, dislocated workers, and/or incumbent workers that are eligible under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. A fundamental goal of this NOFO is to increase apprenticeship opportunities for minorities and targeted populations that are underrepresented in registered apprenticeship occupations in Illinois.

For more information, view the program information at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/apprenticeshipnofo2021>. There are multiple webinar sessions and recordings pertaining to this opportunity including Apprenticeship Areas of Industry Focus, best practices, and diversity, equity, and inclusion among other topics. To register for any of these webinars, click on the program link above. Applications will be due on September 15, 2021.

Following DCEO

If you have upcoming meetings or events and would like DCEO to participate, please reach out to me. One of our goals is to ensure information about our programs and activities is getting out to the communities and we're happy to participate. We continue to schedule workshops and presentations for 2021 and are now looking towards 2022, so please let us know if you are interested in partnering with us to provide program information to your organization and region. I also encourage you to follow us on our social media channels for real time updates.

PC's for People Partnership

PCs for People and various community partners, Illinois has launched a statewide network that will receive, refurbish and redistribute used computers to those in need. For more information, click [here](#).

If you are interested in donating equipment to this program, PCs for People will accept any and all used computer equipment, redistributing what it can refurbish and recycling what it cannot refurbish. PCs for People is NAID AAA and R2 certified, requiring the non-for-profit to practice the highest standards of information destruction, hard drive sanitization, and environmental computer device recycling along with a zero-landfill policy. **If your entity is undertaking a pc refresh or you know of an entity that is looking to undertake one and would be interested in donating to this program, please let me know and we'll help make the connection to PC's for People.**

U.S. Economic Development Administration (EDA) ARPA Programs

The US Economic Development Administration (EDA) has announced six new programs, collectively called Investing in America's Communities, that they will execute to equitably invest the \$3 billion it received from President Biden's American Rescue Plan. This EDA investment is the largest economic development initiative from the Department of Commerce in decades and will help communities across the country build back better. Investing in America's Communities includes:

- [Build Back Better Regional Challenge](#) (\$1 billion) will capitalize on American ingenuity and American workers by providing a transformational investment to regions across the country to revitalize their economies.
- [Good Jobs Challenge](#) (\$500 million) is designed to help get Americans back in good-paying jobs. The program will develop and strengthen regional workforce training systems and sector-based partnerships with a focus on programs targeted at women, people of color and historically underserved communities.
- [Economic Adjustment Assistance](#) (\$500 million) grants will help hundreds of communities across the nation plan, build, innovate, and put people back to work through projects tailored to meet local needs.
- [Indigenous Communities](#) (\$100 million) program will work hand-in-hand with Tribal Governments and Indigenous communities to develop and execute economic development projects they need to recover from the pandemic and build economies for the future.
- [Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation](#) (\$750 million) program will focus on revitalizing the hard-hit travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation industries and accelerate the recovery of communities that rely on these sectors.
- [Statewide Planning, Research and Networks](#) (\$90 million) grants include funding for state planning efforts as well as grants to build Communities of Practice to extend technical assistance to support EDA's work with grantees.

As part of the six programs, EDA is making a [Coal Communities Commitment](#), allocating \$300 million to ensure support for these communities as they recover from the pandemic and create new jobs and opportunities, including through the creation or expansion of a new industry sector. EDA has also set up webinars that dive into each program in more details. To find information on these webinars and program opportunities, [visit www.eda.gov/ARPA](http://www.eda.gov/ARPA).

IDNR OSLAD Grant Application DUE September 1, 2021

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) is now accepting applications for the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grant program. The funding may be used for projects ranging from small neighborhood parks, tot lots, large community and county parks and nature areas. Land acquisition projects may also qualify. The OSLAD program provides funding assistance to local governments for acquisition and/or development of land for public outdoor recreation areas. Grant awardees will receive a 50% advance payment of the grant award amount shortly after the grant agreement is executed. **Applications must be submitted by 5:00 p.m. September 1, 2021. Potential applicants can discuss their projects with IDNR grant administrators by making [an appointment via this link](#).**

If a municipality has any questions, please feel welcome to contact Marvin Williams by email at marvin.williams2@illinois.gov or visit [IDNR's OSLAD webpage \(available via this link\)](#) for more information regarding this opportunity.

IDOT – Safe Routes to School Program

Illinois Department of Transportation announced this week that it is seeking proposals for projects that will help children walk and bike to school through the Safe Routes to School program. The funding opportunity further highlights IDOT's commitment under Gov. JB Pritzker to promote and expand active transportation options in communities throughout Illinois.

Administered by IDOT using federal funds, Safe Routes to School supports projects that improve safety and reduce traffic in areas around elementary and middle schools. The new grant cycle will distribute a total of \$12 million for infrastructure projects only. Projects can include new sidewalks, speed monitoring systems and improvements to make routes more accessible for individuals with disabilities. A 20% local match is required, with a maximum award of \$250,000.

Successful applications must demonstrate how the projects will encourage students to walk or bike. Eligible applicants include school districts, local governments, planning organizations and nonprofit associations. Greater benefit will be placed on schools with higher percentages of low-income students and students with disabilities. **The deadline to apply is Sept. 30.** The awards will be announced early next year. For more information, including selection criteria, visit <https://idot.click/SRTS> or email DOT.SafeRoutes@Illinois.gov.

State Fire Marshal's Small Equipment Grant Program

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) announced last week, the application period is open for the Small Equipment Grant Program. All interested departments should send an application to OSFM no later than October 22, 2021. OSFM will award \$2.5 million to eligible fire departments and ambulance services during this application period.

The Small Equipment Grant Program was established to provide grants of up to \$26,000 for the purchase of small firefighting and ambulance equipment. A total of \$3.3 million was awarded to 149 fire departments/districts and EMS providers across the state in June.

Fire department, fire protection districts and township fire department applicants are required to have participated in the National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) for a minimum of two years prior to applying. The OSFM will require departments to be current through June 2021 for this grant period.

Additional information including the application can be found here:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/lam/FireDepartment/Grants-and-Loans/Pages/default.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2IKJADTq30x027VLZUazoBZVtynRWD91meoygszVGPng61et5NSFhblXc>

Completed applications should be submitted to:

Office of the State Fire Marshal
Small Equipment Grant Program
1035 Stevenson Drive
Springfield, IL 62703