



**Office of the Governor  
JB Pritzker**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

Tuesday, Mar. 17, 2020

**CONTACT**

[Gov.Press@illinois.gov](mailto:Gov.Press@illinois.gov)

## **Gov. Pritzker to File for Statewide Eligibility for Small Business Administration Loans**

**Chicago** — In another effort to provide economic assistance to Illinoisans facing unprecedented challenges due to COVID-19, Governor JB Pritzker announced that his administration will file for statewide eligibility in a federal loan program for small businesses facing financial hardship.

“I have directed my administration to do everything in our power to support our working families, and we are also working expeditiously to mitigate the challenges small businesses are facing,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “My Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has secured the necessary documentation to declare a statewide Economic Injury Declaration with the U.S. Small Business Association. The SBA is offering coronavirus disaster assistance loans to help impacted companies get through this period of instability, and this will ensure that all of our counties qualify for assistance.”

“Many businesses are struggling due to the spread of COVID-19 across the state, with small businesses feeling the impact sharply,” **said Erin Guthrie, Director of DCEO**. “These loans from SBA are among the many tools the administration is pursuing to provide relief for businesses in the near and long term.”

The Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity has contacted and received responses from over 1,000 businesses in every corner of the state in order to file with the U.S. Small Business Administration.

The low-interest loans offer up to \$2 million in assistance per eligible small business or non-profit organization that applies. These loans can be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts payable and other bills that cannot be paid due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The interest rate for businesses without credit available elsewhere is 3.75%, and the non-profit rate is 2.75%. According to the Small Business Administration, loans

are available with long-term repayments to keep payments affordable, up to a maximum of 30 years.

Once approved by the federal government, business owners and non-profit leaders can apply for the loans here: <https://disasterloan.sba.gov/ela/>

## **ADDITIONAL ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE**

- **UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE:** Individuals without access to paid sick leave or unable to work due to COVID-19 can apply for unemployment insurance under the administration's expansion. The governor's executive order waives the 7-day waiting period for residents to apply for unemployment benefits, meaning anyone who qualifies can file and become immediately eligible instead of experiencing a week-long lag during this challenging time. Gov. Pritzker is working with the federal delegation and congressional leadership to push the Trump administration to allow the state to increase the length of benefits beyond 26 weeks as this crisis continues to provide significant fiscal challenges for Illinois families.
- **UTILITY RELIEF:** Gov. Pritzker and Attorney General Raoul have urged the Illinois Commerce Commission to immediately institute a moratorium on shutoffs for all utility companies across Illinois – including energy, telecommunications and water – until the state disaster proclamation has been lifted. The administration is also requesting changes to payment and collection policies to ensure Illinoisans aren't saddled with utility debt as a result of COVID-19. Several have announced plans to maintain services and waive late payment fees.
- **FOOD ACCESS:** The Pritzker administration is working directly with the eight major food banks across Illinois to expand services. The administration is reaching out to food manufacturers to ensure food banks are prioritized and can provide our vulnerable residents the food they need. ISBE obtained a waiver from the federal government to continue distributing meals to all children who qualify for free and reduced lunch. The Governor is also encouraging schools to expand their meal distribution program to all children under 18 or to any student enrolled in an Illinois school, regardless of their age.
- **MEDICAID WAIVER:** The administration is in the process of filing a federal waiver to expand Medicaid coverage, beginning work on the waiver application as soon as the federal government declared a national emergency and activated the Stafford Act. If the federal waiver is approved, the state will be able to expand Medicaid services through the addition of new medical providers, increased access across the state and ramped up services to many of the state's most vulnerable populations.

## **ILLINOISANS: STAY HOME**

Social distancing is the paramount strategy for minimizing the spread of COVID-19 in our communities. The Governor continues to make tough calls to keep Illinoisans safe, including mandating that events of 50 people or more be canceled, suspending dine-in operations of bars and restaurants and temporarily closing public and private K-12 schools. Public health officials continue to urge Illinoisans to stay home as much as possible.

Those experiencing symptoms should call a health care provider who will help arrange medical treatment without putting others at risk of exposure.

The Illinois Department of Public Health has a statewide COVID-19 hotline and website to answer any questions from the public or to report a suspected case: call 1-800-889-3931 or visit [IDPH.illinois.gov](http://IDPH.illinois.gov).

# # #