



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Northeast Region Weekly Update November 16, 2020

I hope this message finds you well and you are staying safe! With all regions of the state under additional mitigation, please remember to wear your mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance. We're All in Illinois! This week, IDPH issued some [holiday season safety tips](#). Check out this guidance. Below are links for the mitigation measures and our updated FAQs that also answer questions related to mitigation. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

We are continuing to review and award applications under the Business Interruption Grant program. There is still funding available in the program to assist eligible businesses who have suffered losses related to COVID-19, especially in the downstate areas. We can schedule technical assistance sessions to help businesses with their application questions. Please read on for other events and program updates.

If you want to receive updates from the Department, you can fill out this [form](#) and you'll be added to our Department contact list. This will include additional information on COVID-19 relief programs as well as other important information. I also encourage you to follow us on our social media channels for real time updates.

For additional information or questions, you can contact me by phone at 312-497-1823 or by email at joseph.mckeown@illinois.gov. I will respond to your message as quickly as I can. Additionally, 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.

Business Interruption Grant Program

Update: There are still funds available in this program. If your organization would like me to host a webinar or technical assistance session for you on this topic, please let me know and we can get something scheduled. We want to make sure businesses are aware of the opportunity and stand ready to help answer questions. We have some sessions set up as listed below. We do also have a [FAQ document](#) that has been recently updated and can help answer some questions. You can also submit a question via the following question submission form in either [English](#) or [Spanish](#).

Applications for a second round of funding are now being accepted and can be found [here](#). A total of \$220 million will be made available for small businesses **of all types** in Illinois. Grants will be awarded and funded on a rolling basis until funding is depleted. The grant size will be equivalent to two months of expenses. We have begun to award funding from this round. A list of grant recipients can be found [here](#).

The BIG program is open to **all eligible** businesses (for profit and nonprofit) with \$20 million or less in annual revenue in 2019 and experienced losses due to COVID-19. Of the total funding, \$70 million will be invested in Disproportionately Impacted Areas (DIAs) and \$60 million in heavily impacted industries. A map of the DIAs and the eligibility guidelines can be found on our [website](#). The heavily impacted industries are defined as having annual revenues of \$10 million or less and have been close or operating at a very diminished capacity since mid-March and are likely to continue to do so until Phase 5 of the Restore Illinois Plan. These industries include the following:

- Event spaces
- Music venues
- Performing arts venues
- Indoor recreation
- Amusement parks
- Movie theaters
- Museums
- Charter/shuttle buses

DCEO is hosting some upcoming BIG webinars for LatinX/Hispanic businesses to learn about eligibility, program details, and the application process. Technical assistance support will also be provided for the last 30 minutes of the session to help answer your questions about the application process. Please feel free to share the information below with your networks.

11/18 (Central, Southwest, North Central, Northern Stateline Latinx Business Webinars)

Wednesday, November 18, 2020 2:00 pm Central Standard Time (Chicago, GMT-06:00)

Event address for attendees:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/onstage/g.php?MTID=e37eb8dc52a5959809e4c807beccef0b7>

11/20 (Northeast, East Central Latinx Business Webinars)

Friday, November 20, 2020 10:00 am Central Standard Time (Chicago, GMT-06:00)

Event address for attendees:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/onstage/g.php?MTID=e61023b575106ad6fbb1797a21fea744c>

12/9 (OMEE Latinx Women Owned Business BIG Webinar)

Wednesday, December 9, 2020 2:00 pm

Event address for attendees:

<https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/onstage/g.php?MTID=e6a253a0aabf18163a7d14bd488432ec5>

Local CURE Support Program

Local Coronavirus Urgent Remediation Emergency (Local CURE) Support Program: Through this program, the State will take steps to deploy \$250 million to local governments in the coming months to help local governments secure reimbursement on eligible costs associated with the emergency response to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. DCEO has posted information on our website [here](#). DCEO has reopened the application period for eligible units of local government for Allotment C (units not including municipalities, counties, or public health department). The application can be found [here](#). The website also has some good Q&A documents that can help with determining if an expense is eligible for reimbursement. Additional guidance has been released on Substantially Dedicated Payroll and Claiming the Costs of Implementing CDC Guidance for Public Employees and within Public Spaces or Facilities. Check out these new documents and other guidance [here](#). If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. You can also submit questions to LocalCURE@crowe.com and we will get back to you.

The LocalCURE Support Team is now hosting weekly office hours!

Join us on Zoom from 2-2:30pm CST every Friday for open Q&A regarding the LocalCURE program.

This is an informal event, so feel free to call in for just a second or stay the whole time.

Link: <https://crowe.zoom.us/j/99054821252?pwd=bmlUT0JkeHp1M1UrQnRBek5rVTBjQT09>

Password: 150052

Local CURE Economic Support Payments Grant Program: The Department is happy to release the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the Local CURE Economic Support Payments Grant Program. This program will assist eligible Local Governments with providing economic support payments to qualified businesses within their jurisdictions that have experienced interruption of business attributable to the COVID-19 public health emergency. To learn more about this program, eligibility criteria, requirements, and how to apply, please [click here](#). This page contains the NOFO Supplement and required application documents.

The Department will review complete applications every two weeks according to the application window dates below:

Application Window Open	Application Window Close
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October 31, 2020	November 13, 2020
November 14, 2020	November 30, 2020
December 1, 2020	December 11, 2020
December 12, 2020	December 28, 2020
December 29, 2020	*January 8, 2021
January 9, 2021	*January 15, 2021

Rebuild Distressed Communities Grant Program

Rebuild Distressed Communities is a \$25 million economic recovery program to support economically distressed Illinois businesses and communities that have sustained property damage due to civil unrest on or after May 25th, 2020. DCEO has partnered with two community organizations, Local Initiative Services Corporation (LISC) and Chicago Neighborhood Initiatives, Inc. (CNI), to operate the program on behalf of DCEO.

The Rebuild Distressed Communities grant program will reimburse the cost of repairs for structural damages, including repairs to storefronts and entrances, improving electrical systems, and restoring exterior work. For work yet to be completed, LISC and CNI will partner with local contractors and pay for them to perform the work. The program will prioritize small businesses, underinsured or uninsured businesses, businesses that have a high community impact – such as grocery stores – and businesses in communities that have experienced historic disinvestment. The program also prioritizes the use of BEP-certified contractors, including minority- and women-owned businesses, to do the repair work. Information on the program may be found at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/Pages/C19DisadvantagedBusGrants-DistressedCapital.aspx>.

Restore Illinois

With the new 11 region format, the Central Economic Development region is now within two Restore Illinois regions. All regions of the state are currently under resurgence mitigation measures. You can find the full list of mitigation measures [here](#). Highlights from the Tier 1 mitigation measures are:

- No indoor service for bars and restaurants.
- Bars and restaurants must close at 11 pm and may reopen no earlier than 6 am the following day.

- While outdoor seating is allowed, tables should be 6 feet apart; reservations are required for each party; and no seating of multiple parties at one table.
- Meetings, social events and gatherings are limited to the **lesser** of 25 guests or 25% overall room capacity both indoors and outdoors.
- Gaming and Casinos close at 11 pm and are limited to 25% capacity.

We've updated our FAQs to include more questions on mitigation. They can be found on our website [here](#). The region will operate under these mitigation measures until 14 days have passed **and** the region reaches a 7-day rolling positive rate average of less than 6.5%. Please don't hesitate to let me know if you have any questions regarding this move to mitigation.

The Illinois Department of Public Health also has numerous guidance documents and other information on their website at <http://dph.illinois.gov/covid19>. Also, IDPH released guidance on Halloween activities. You can find that guidance [here](#). Additionally, the Illinois Department of Finance and Professional Regulation has information and guidance for industries regulated by that office. You can access their website [here](#).

Coronavirus Response:

Downstate Small Business Stabilization Program

We continue to accept applications under this program. This program will offer small businesses with at least one employee (not including the owner) and up to 50 employees the opportunity to partner with their local governments to obtain grants of up to \$25,000 for 60 days of working capital. Grant applicants should use the most current Guidebook for this program as well as streamlined the GATA budget form for this program. Both documents can be found on our website [here](#). If you have questions about this program, do not hesitate to reach out to me or to the Office of Community Development grant manager for your county. Their contact information may be found [here](#). Applications that have been submitted are under review and we will continue to make announcements.

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

All Illinois small businesses can again apply for the 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. While the EIDL Advance is no longer available, businesses can still apply for the EIDL loan. 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.

Other DCEO Programs

Manufacturing Training Academies

Governor JB Pritzker joined the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the Illinois Community College Board (ICCB) and industry leaders in announcing a first-of-its-kind program to expand manufacturing training opportunities for Illinois residents. Through a \$15 million Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) released this week, Illinois will establish two new innovative Manufacturing Trainings Academies that will

expand opportunities for skills training, boost retention of manufacturers in downstate communities, and attract more investment by manufacturing companies throughout Illinois.

Through a competitive NOFO process, DCEO will provide a total of \$15 million for two capital grants to fund the construction of new facilities to house two new Manufacturing Training Academies in downstate Illinois. The NOFO is seeking proposals from community colleges to provide cutting-edge training programs that will equip students for an array of well-paying skilled manufacturing jobs that require specialized training. The Manufacturing Training Academies are part of the economic vision for growth and equity put forward by the Governor's 5-year economic plan, which offers a blueprint for growth among the state's strongest and highest growth potential sectors – including manufacturing. These academies will offer specialized training that's not widely available at downstate community colleges for high-demand manufacturing jobs such as machinery mechanics and computer numerically controlled (CNC) machine operators and programmers. For more information and to see the NOFO, please visit our website [here](#).

Broadband Expansion Funding Opportunity

Governor JB Pritzker announced this week that the state is releasing \$50 million in funding for the second round of matching grants through Connect Illinois, the state's \$420 million statewide broadband expansion plan. Illinois' Office of Broadband will support expanded connections in new communities across the state through an application, which will remain open through February 2021. Funding for the program is made possible by Governor Pritzker's bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan, the first comprehensive infrastructure program in Illinois in nearly a decade.

This availability of additional funding builds on the inaugural round of funding released earlier this year, which supported 28 projects collectively slated to support over 26,000 new or enhanced connections serving every corner of the state. Eligible applicants include internet service providers, rural cooperatives, nonprofits and local governments. Up to \$5 million per project will be available during the second round, and subsequent rounds will follow over the course of the next several years. The second round of Connect Illinois calls for a nonstate match component requiring companies to dedicate funding that will accelerate the delivery of broadband investments.

The application for the second round of funding largely mirrors requirements of the first application – including a 50 percent nonmatch in most cases. To ensure an equal playing field, the administration has instituted an exemption allowing a lower nonstate match for project proposals concerning economically distressed communities. This program change acknowledges the difficulty of connecting the hardest-to-serve areas of Illinois, and the compounding challenges created by the COVID-19 crisis, allowing underserved communities to be competitive when applying for critical infrastructure dollars.

For more information on the Notice of Funding Opportunity and to view the application, please visit the [Connect Illinois page](#).

Get Hired Illinois

DCEO in conjunction with IDES launched the Get Hired Illinois. This is a new portal designed to connect workers with available job and career training opportunities across the state. Governor Pritzker also announced that beginning in June, Illinois residents will have free access to online workforce development courses via a partnership with Coursera. Residents and employers may access Get Hired at www.illinois.gov/gethired. This portal blends IDES and DCEO resources to provide a one-stop-shop for both job seekers and employers – providing information on job opportunities as well as unemployment resources. The portal is designed to be user-

friendly for job seekers of all levels and backgrounds and allows employers to upload jobs, virtual career fairs and training opportunities. Please check this out whether you are a job seeker or an employer.

Other News and Notes:

IL Dept. of Labor – Back to Business Illinois

The Illinois Department of Labor (IDOL) announced this week the launch of Back to Business Illinois, a free, voluntary service to connect small businesses of 250 employees or fewer with consultants who will help them evaluate and address workplace safety and health issues related to COVID-19. The consultants will create a plan for small businesses that promotes a safe, healthy and productive environment for workers and customers. Back to Business Illinois health and safety consultants in IDOL's Workplace Safety and Health Consultation Division will help local small businesses audit their physical operation, identify best practices and find ways to implement them efficiently. Businesses can voluntarily complete a series of online modules and then institute the necessary practices to promote a safe work environment. The online guidance and education program will emphasize areas including basic infection prevention, physical space modification, infectious disease planning, employee monitoring and workplace flexibility.

This is a non-punitive program, and no fines or citations are associated with it. It is designed entirely as a benefit to empower Illinois small businesses to continue operating safely. For more information on the Back to Business Illinois program, visit the official website at: www.illinois.gov/worksafe.

Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and other donations

If businesses have personal protection equipment (PPE) that they would like to **donate**, they can send an email to the State of Illinois' Covid-19 Donation Intake Team (ppe.donations@illinois.gov). Please note that all items should be in the manufacturer's original packaging and unopened, as they cannot accept open products or homemade items. For non-PPE related donations, businesses may reach out to businessdonations@illinois.gov.

If businesses have PPE that they are interested in **selling** to the state, they can send an email to the State of Illinois' Covid-19 PPE Procurement Team (covid.procurement@illinois.gov). In the email, they should indicate the following:

- What PPE is for sale
- The quantity of these items
- The price of these items
- The location of these items

If businesses have a facility and are capable of **manufacturing PPE** or are able to quickly make the switch to manufacture PPE, they should reach out to the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center [here](#). If businesses are manufacturers of PPE **looking for a supplier**, they should reach out to the Illinois Manufacturing Excellence Center [here](#). For **additional information** regarding PPE and donations, more information can be found [here](#).