



The Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity has made some funds available for your local WorkNet offices throughout Illinois to **prevent essential, small businesses from laying off or furloughing employees**. They are looking for businesses for whom these potential grant dollars would make the difference between keeping workers on or having to layoff/furlough. Here are some sample scenarios that qualifying businesses ("essential" per the Governor's order and "small" by the SBA's definition) can apply to cover—

- A small business needs their employees to be at work, on-site, but cannot afford frequent deep cleaning to help prevent potential exposure to COVID-19. Layoff aversion funds could be used to pay for a cleaning/sanitization service.
- A small business whose employees use specific software or computer applications asks their employees to work from home/remotely in order to support social distancing and limit potential exposure to COVID-19. Layoff aversion funding could be used to purchase the software programs and/or hardware (computers) that the employee would need to use from home to support their work.
- A call center environment needs to have their employees work from home/remotely in order to support social distancing and limit potential exposure to COVID-19. Layoff aversion funding could be used to purchase remote access supplies, including laptop computers and/or smart phones, that the employee would need to use from home to support their work.
- In order to support social distancing and limit potential exposure to COVID-19, a company that usually runs two shifts of workers adds a third shift, so that fewer employees are on onsite at any given time. Layoff aversion funding could be used to offset related costs to the employer or workers, excluding wages and benefits.
- Incumbent worker training to redirect and reassign existing employees on critical business needs. Layoff aversion funding can help pay for projects to support the production of goods and services that are needed to address COVID-19 National Health Emergency and/or preserve critical business operations to stay in business.

Please note that this list is not all inclusive. **Employee payroll and benefits cannot, however, be covered through this funding opportunity**. Upcoming costs as well as expenses incurred already since the start of the Governor's stay-at-home order (March 20) can be reimbursed through this grant. The amount that can be awarded per company is \$5,000-\$50,000.

There is a **very brief application** document (attached) that companies in need should complete and submit to your local WorkNet office by close of business **Wednesday, May 6**. We ask that you share this information with your businesses who may potentially qualify. You can also assist with the brief application if you so desire. We are looking for companies for which this type of funding will truly be a game changer!



The key for your members and their member companies to keep in mind is the money is going to the local workforce areas. The chambers / businesses interested in receiving assistance must connect with their respective local workforce area.

You may wish to coordinate a request (or at least a request for info) for your companies to their respective LWIA (recommended), or have the businesses work directly with the local areas.

If a chamber is interested but does not know how to connect with the local area, please let me know and I'll connect you with [Mike Baker/DCEO](#).