



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

JB Pritzker, Governor

Northeast Region Weekly Update

December 12, 2020

I hope this message finds you well and you are staying safe! With all regions still in Tier 3 Resurgence Mitigation, please remember to wear your mask, wash your hands, and watch your distance. We're All in Illinois! Yesterday, we announced the closing of the application period for the Business Interruption Grant program on Tuesday, December 15th at 5pm. If you have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to me.

Business Interruption Grant Program

Update: We are continuing to review the applications that have been received to date. The grant application period closes at 5pm on Tuesday, December 15th. Please note that this is a rolling program and grants will be awarded until the funding is depleted. All applicants should receive a confirmation email after their application has been submitted. If you did not receive an email after a couple days of submitting the application, please check your spam/junk email folder. We have found that sometimes the email is being directed to a spam/junk folder. Please monitor the email address that was submitted as part of the application process. Communication will be sent to that email address. Information on the Business Interruption Grant (BIG) program can be found on our website [here](#). A list of grant recipients from this round as of December 10, 2020 can be found [here](#).

Hope VI Main Street Grant Opportunity

The US Dept. of Housing and Urban Development has posted a grant opportunity that is designed to provide grants to small communities to assist in the renovation of an historic or traditional central business district, or "Main Street" area, by replacing unused, obsolete, commercial space in buildings with affordable housing units; enhance economic development in Main Street areas; and provide affordable housing in Main Street areas. This opportunity is open to units of local government defined as any city, town, township, village, county, parish, or other general purpose political subdivision of a state or territory. The local government must 1) have a population of 50,000 or less; 2) not be served by a local or county public housing agency that administers more than 100 physical public housing units within the local government's jurisdiction. Such units exclude Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher subsidized units. The deadline to apply is January 19, 2021. The funding opportunity can be found here: [FR-6400-N-03](#).

DCEO is hosting two webinars next week to present information on this opportunity. The webinars are:

1. **Wednesday, December 16th, 2020 @ 10:00 AM CST. To register, click [here](#).**
2. **Friday, December 18th, 2020 @ 10:00 AM CST. To register, click [here](#).**

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](#). 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 not been able to access the portal or have not received the access email, please send a message to our partner, Crowe, at LocalCURE@crowe.com and they will be able to assist you.** If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. You have other questions you can send them 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=bmIUT0JkeHp1M1UrQnRBek5rVTBjQT09>

Password: 150052

Small Business Centers, Programs and Resources

The State of Illinois is here to help. We've created a clearinghouse of information for entrepreneurs on starting a new business, a one-stop shop for all thing's startup. Your road to business ownership begins here. For small business centers, programs and resources, click [here](#)

Featured Properties Campaign – With Intersect Illinois

As Intersect Illinois continues to work to attract businesses to Illinois, they are also ramping up our external marketing efforts. One way they are doing this is by engaging with our vast network of site selection consultants and corporate end users to increase the visibility of available real estate properties throughout the state. These "featured properties" will be highlighted in Intersect's newsletter, which focuses on opportunities in targeted industries each quarter.

This quarter will focus on agribusiness & food processing facilities. Intersect is asking you to send them your community's available facilities suitable for food processing, cannabis food processing, indoor farming, agtech, cold storage sites and related sectors.

Requirements for submissions (only one needs to be fulfilled):

- a. AgTech
 - Close to a research university with existing agtech program and/or existing regional agtech ecosystem
 - Proximity to tech labor force
- b. Indoor Farming
 - Greenfield site with large power capabilities (minimum 1 MW)
 - Available water and wastewater
- c. Food Processing
 - Existing buildings (minimum 50,000 SF)
 - Zoning for industrial or warehouse
 - Existing freezer/cooling space
 - Preferred USDA certified
 - Preferred former food processing facility
- d. Existing Cold Storage Facility
 - Existing building with 5,000 SF minimum of freezer or cooling space

The submissions they receive will be prominently displayed on our website and highlighted in Intersect's newsletter. Please submit your available agribusiness & food processing properties by EOD Wednesday, December 16th. In order to officially submit your facility, the property will need to be entered into our database and an RFI completed. Please contact me and I will send further instructions and the necessary documentation.

As we continue our work to bring economic growth and jobs to Illinois, your partnership and collaboration is crucial. This initiative will help market your properties to decision makers, and we hope you find it to be a beneficial opportunity to promote your community and available sites.

Tier 3 Resurgence Mitigation

Due to a severe uptick in COVID-19 case counts and community spread, the State of Illinois has announced implementation of Tier 3 mitigations effective Friday, November 20, 2020. These measures introduce new capacity restrictions and operating guidelines for several industries. This new tier aims to limit gatherings and encourages people to stay home to the greatest extent possible, while permitting some industries to remain open at significantly reduced capacities with proper safety measures in place. All detailed Phase 4 operational guidance remains in effect. Where Phase 4 guidance and Tier 3 Mitigations imply different standards, the more restrictive Tier 3 Mitigations will apply. Tier 3 Mitigations can be found [here](#). FAQs on the Tier 3 mitigation can be found [here](#). We are continuing to update these FAQs with the latest version dates 11/29/20.

While the entire state is moving into Tier 3 Mitigation at the same time, IDPH will continue to track the metrics by region to determine if mitigations can be relaxed, if additional mitigations are required, or if current mitigation should remain in place. In order for a region to move back to Tier 2 mitigations, a region must experience less than 12% 7-day average test positivity rate for three consecutive days AND greater than 20% available intensive care unit (ICU) and hospital bed availability for three consecutive days AND declining 7-day average COVID hospitalizations for 7 out of the last 10 days. Follow the latest regional metrics at: <https://dph.illinois.gov/regionmetrics> .

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. Applicants can begin submitting applications for **Round 2 on December 21st until January 21st**. Applications will be accepted in rounds until funding is exhausted.

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> .

Coronavirus Response:

Downstate Small Business Stabilization Program

We continue to accept applications under this program. As of November 1, 2020, the Department is expanding the Downstate Small Business Stabilization program to include Essential Businesses that have lost more than 20% in sales in comparison to the same time period in 2019. 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: Franchise Webinar and Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL)

Is a Franchise in Your Future?

Want to run your own business, but avoid the risk of starting from scratch? Franchising can be a great alternative for entrepreneurs open to accepting guidance in the start-up phase. Join our free webinar as we discuss this unique opportunity, including information on financing and tips from a franchise broker, a franchisor, and an established franchisee. Bring your questions!

Tuesday, Dec. 15, 9-11:30 a.m.

Register at: FranchisingDec15.eventbrite.com

Contact Economic Development Specialist Stephen Konkle at stephen.konkle@sba.gov or (312) 886-4208 to learn more.

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 and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) Office of Broadband announced a new Digital Equity Package, enlisting state, local, nonprofit and philanthropic support to address gaps in digital access, adoption, and affordability for high-speed internet access. The comprehensive approach is designed to help communities identify and address existing broadband equity gaps, as well as to leverage new and existing sources of funding for long-term broadband equity. New plans to spearhead digital equity for Illinois build on Governor Pritzker's bold Connect Illinois program, a \$420 million investment to bring universal access throughout the state by 2024.

This announcement directs an initial \$750,000 to advance these goals through complementary grants and programming to promote broadband planning and capacity building and to aid in the creation of the nation's first integrated statewide network for improving digital equity and inclusion – namely, by addressing gaps in household access to computing devices, hotspot connectivity, and digital literacy skills. The announcement opens application windows for three complementary opportunities – for funding and collaboration – involving regional broadband equity evaluation and engagement, community broadband planning and capacity building, and locally-integrated "digital navigator" development.

Broadband READY Grants - \$250,000

A collaborative effort between the Illinois Office of Broadband and the Illinois Innovation Network, the Broadband Regional Engagement for Adoption + Digital Equity (READY) grants will direct \$250,000 to qualified regional entities statewide to explore opportunities for equitable advances in the areas of broadband access, adoption, and utilization. Grant awards of up to \$50,000 will identify current digital inequities as well as next steps in creating a digital inclusion ecosystem through regional collaboration among community and economic development organizations, education, local leaders, and other related stakeholders. The program seeks to provide scalable solutions for broadband utilization across all ten Illinois economic development regions – including pressing needs such as telehealth and remote learning. The Illinois Innovation Network will contribute \$100,000 to support the effort, which will leverage emerging resources in statewide computer refurbishing and digital navigator capacity. [Click here](#) for the NOFO.

Illinois Connected Communities Grants - \$150,000

A partnership by the Office of Broadband, the Benton Institute for Broadband & Society, and local philanthropic organizations, the Illinois Connected Communities (ICC) program was first launched in the summer of 2020 to help drive community planning and capacity building. A total of \$150,000 in second round state funding, combined with philanthropic dollars that underwrites the cost of expert consultative services, and access to best practice curriculum, will be made available to assist local governments, libraries, schools, and various local organizations with planning and progress around broadband access, adoption, and utilization.

A first round of state grant funding, combined with a philanthropic match, was directed to 12 community-based organizations in July to assist with planning to ensure access, adoption, and utilization of high-speed broadband. This latest round will allow communities to apply for up to \$15,000 in grants that will support community based broadband planning and capacity building. [Click here](#) for the NOFO.

Digital Navigator Collaboration

To support community digital equity needs, the Office of Broadband will partner with the National Digital Inclusion Alliance (NDIA) and PCs for People to establish digital navigator capacity within communities around the state. Navigators will work to address the digital inclusion process – including home connectivity, devices, and digital skills. Digital navigators will assess residents' needs and connect with them to resources that match their households' lifestyles. These navigators can be volunteers or cross-trained staff who already work in social service agencies, libraries, healthcare, and more and who will offer remote and socially distant in-person guidance. A cohort of qualified applicants will be provided with expert training as well as the opportunity to work directly with project partners on resource establishment and digital equity mapping. [Click here](#) for the NOFO.

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.

Following DCEO

For additional information or questions, you can contact me by phone at 312-497-1823 or by email 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.

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.

Other News and Notes:

IEPA Unsewered Community Grant Programs

The [Unsewered Community Construction Grant Program \(UCCGP\)](#) Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) describes how qualified applicants that meet all requirements can receive UCCGP funds to finance the corrective actions needed to address issues with wastewater collection and treatment. The UCCGP NOFO can be found at this link: [UCCGP NOFO](#). All required forms and information can also be found at the webpage shown [here](#). Applications for the UCCGP program will be accepted **September 23 through 5:00 PM (CST) on December 31, 2020**.

State Fire Marshal's Small Equipment Grant Program

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM) announced the application period is open for the Small Equipment Grant Program. **All interested departments should send an application to OSFM no later than January 29, 2021.** OSFM will award \$3.3 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. This program is an innovative approach to a problem that has long caused difficulties for the fire departments and not-for-profit ambulance services in Illinois, particularly those that have hardships in generating the necessary revenue for small

equipment. The purpose is to allow eligible applicants the opportunity to purchase small tools and equipment that they may otherwise not be able to purchase. In addition to firefighting personal protective equipment (PPE), applicants can also apply for personal infection control items such as masks, gowns and gloves this application cycle. Most Illinois fire departments, fire protection districts and township fire departments are eligible to apply. In addition, stand-alone, not-for-profit ambulance service providers are eligible to apply.

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. Due to NFIRS undergoing updates at this time, the OSFM will require departments to be current through June 2020 for this grant period.

Additional information including the application can be found here:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/sfm/1am/FireDepartment/Grants-and-Loans/Pages/default.aspx?fbclid=IwAR2IKJADTq30x027VLZUazoBZVtynRWD91meoygszVGPng61et5NSFhblXc>

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](#).