



## Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

### Southwest Region Weekly Update November 17, 2023

#### Back to Business New Biz Grant

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced \$25 million in available grant funding through the Back to Business (B2B) NewBiz program. Following state recovery programming for businesses totaling \$1.5 billion, the latest American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-funded opportunity is designed to provide additional support for businesses in hard-hit sectors who launched during the pandemic. Businesses that launched in 2020 or 2021 and remain in operation have faced significant impacts during the pandemic, but they have not been eligible for other federal or state relief programming since they were not operational prior to the pandemic. To provide hands-on support and raise awareness about the program, the State has mobilized a network of nearly 100 community navigators across Illinois. Applicants are encouraged to visit [b2bnewbiz.com](https://b2bnewbiz.com) to learn more and apply.

Join DCEO staff to learn about our new Back to Business NewBiz program. This grant program will provide additional support for businesses in hard-hit sectors who launched during the pandemic in 2020 or 2021.

#### Statewide DCEO English-Language Webinars

- **Tuesday, November 21, 2023, 1:30 pm**  
Register here:  
<https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/r3f8f8257771bcc61a37be9ff41e7cd76>
- **Monday, November 27, 2023, 1:00 pm**  
Register here:  
<https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/rc60baebe01dc2a563260207bde74984e>

#### Statewide DCEO Spanish Webinar

- **Miércoles, 29 de noviembre de 2023, 11:00 am**  
Registrar aquí:  
<https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/r2a33a68345396c4d325eb8b259f19a61>

#### Native American Heritage Month 2023

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is proud to celebrate Native American Heritage Month, in partnership with the Native American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois.

#### Proclamation

View the Native American Heritage Month [proclamation](#).

## Save the date: Native American Resources Event

**Tuesday, November 28, 2023**

The Native American Chamber of Commerce in collaboration with DCEO will hold an event to share resources with the Native American community. Questions, contact Diana Alfaro, [diana.alfaro@illinois.gov](mailto:diana.alfaro@illinois.gov).

### Does Your Business Need Assistance?

As one of DCEO's Community Navigators, the [Native American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois](#), provides one-on-one assistance, helps businesses apply for state and other government grant programs, hosts business education events, and more. If you need assistance with your business, please contact the Native American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois to schedule an appointment. You can email them at: [andrew@nacc-il.org](mailto:andrew@nacc-il.org).

**Small Business Development Center (SBDC)** – Centers are located across the state that provide business counseling at **no cost**. They can assist you with business planning, marketing, financial bookkeeping, finding grants, and how to start or grow your business, etc. Here is more info on SBDCs: [Illinois Small Business Development Centers \(SBDC\) - First Stop](#). To find one near you go to: <https://viewer.blipstar.com/blipstar?uid=5161672>.

**Apex Accelerator (formerly Procurement Technical Assistance Center (PTACs)** - Provide assistance to businesses who want to get into the world of government contracting and assist with certifications like getting certified as minority/Native American owned business all at **no cost**. For more information, please click [HERE](#). To find one near you, please click [HERE](#).

### Community Events

There are various community events celebrating Native American-owned businesses and culture. Below is a list of events to consider supporting the Native American community:

Native American Holiday Market

**November 24 & 25, 2023, 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM**

LaSalle Room at Gateway Convention Center, 1 Gateway Drive, Collinsville, IL, 62234

### Stay Connected!

If you want to receive more information on resources for Native American businesses and entrepreneurs, [sign up for our newsletter](#) in which we share about current and upcoming grants and loans.

For more information on Native American Heritage Month contact Diana Alfaro at [Diana.Alfaro@Illinois.gov](mailto:Diana.Alfaro@Illinois.gov) or to learn more about ongoing resources and programs for businesses, follow DCEO on social media @IllinoisDCEO.

## Manufacturing Updates & Supply Chain Resilience Webinar

[PARTNERS IN PROGRESS: Manufacturing Updates & Supply Chain Resilience](#)

**Tuesday | November 28, 2023 | 11:30 am – 12:30 pm (click on link in header to attend)**

Don't miss out on this exclusive opportunity to be part of a crucial conversation involving economic, industry, and community resources all dedicated to helping manufacturers like you not just survive but thrive. This month's interactive webinar will feature leadership from Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity, IMEC, and IMA, presenting the top 5 things you should be aware of this month to prepare for a promising 2024 from our designated organizations. We will also take a deep dive into the critical topics of supply chain resiliency as it is

important to your business's future growth and productivity. At the end of this session, there will be plenty of time for questions, feedback, and answers regarding your specific needs and circumstances. Top level leadership is encouraged to attend to help be the voice of Illinois manufacturers in this discussion.

Key takeaways from this interactive session include:

- Examples of already available resources but also provide insights on how to access and utilize them effectively.
- Address your specific needs, and that's why we've set aside ample time for questions, feedback, and answers tailored to your concerns.
- Opportunity to connect with peers, engage with stakeholders in the same industry.
- Provide actionable steps for future opportunities.

Take this chance to learn, network, and ensure your business is well-prepared for the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in 2024.

### **Tourism Private Sector Grant (Events and Festivals)**

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is issuing a Notice of Funding Opportunity to provide grants for the purpose of attracting, hosting and developing new events and festivals in Illinois or enhancing existing festivals and events. Grantees must be able to match grant award dollar-for dollar; however, up to 25% of the required match may be substituted with in-kind contributions. Costs associated with hosting existing or repeat events and festivals will not be eligible unless documentation can be provided that the event was secured in direct competition with other states or significant enhancements will be made to the event or festival to increase the attendance from travel outside 50 miles.

Tourism Event is defined as an event, such as a major convention, trade show, sporting activity or festival, with potential to attract visitors from outside a 50-mile radius and to produce significantly increased economic impact for the State of Illinois through overnight stays.

Tourism Festival is defined as an organized series of public activities for a specific duration that may include, but are not limited to, cultural performances, exhibitions, fairs, or carnivals that may include music and the service of food and beverages.

Applicant must identify performance measurements they will use to identify successful outcomes as a result of the grant funding such as:

1. Estimated number or percentage of increase visitation as a result of the festival or event;
2. Estimated increase in local hotel tax revenue to the area served after event or festival;
3. Number of media impressions and value for promotion of the festival or event;
4. Estimated increase in sales tax revenue as a result of the festival or event.

Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is \$4,600,000. Awards will range from \$10,000 to \$500,000. Anticipated start date for awards is February 1, 2024 with initial terms of up to one year in length, upon request some pre-award requests may be permitted. The period of performance is expected to be 1/1/2024 through 12/31/2024. **Applications are due December 4, 2023.** To view the NOFO and application documents click [here](#)

## Tourism Attractions Grant

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is issuing this Notice of Funding Opportunity to provide grants to assist in the development or improvement of tourism attractions that increase the economic impact of tourism throughout the State. Grantees must be able to match grant dollars as described in the NOFO.

The Tourism Attractions Grant program is part of a broader effort underway to help reinvigorate tourism in Illinois, and help the tourism industry on a path to economic recovery and welcome more visitors to Illinois. Grants up to \$500,000 will be awarded to develop and enhance Illinois tourism attractions.

Applicant must identify performance measurements they will use to identify successful outcomes as a result of the capital investment; such as:

1. Anticipated number or percentage of increased visitation as a result of the capital investment;
2. Anticipated increase in local hotel tax revenue to the area served after completion of the project;
3. Anticipated increase in local sales tax revenue after completion of the project;

Total amount of funding expected to be awarded through this NOFO is \$10,800,000. Awards will range from \$15,000 to \$500,000. Anticipated start date for awards is February 1, 2024. The period of performance is expected to be January 1, 2024 through December 31, 2024. **Applications are due December 18, 2023.** To view the NOFO and application documents click [here](#)

## Economic Empowerment Centers Program

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) launched \$2.5 million in funding for the new Illinois Economic Empowerment Centers Program (EEC). Eligible career education agencies and non-profit organizations can now apply to serve as EECs to provide entrepreneurship training to prepare individuals from historically marginalized communities to pursue business opportunities in a more inclusive business ecosystem. EECs will be selected through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO)

EECs will provide business advice, technical assistance, education, and cohort training, including resources and training tailored toward start-ups, existing businesses, and dislocated workers. Selected EECs will provide a variety of services, including management analysis and counseling, business planning and financial planning assistance, market analysis, referrals to educational programs and more.

Eligible applicants include career-education agencies and non-profit organizations, including but not limited to local developments corporations, chambers of commerce, community-based outreach centers, community-based organizations that provide services to minority-owned businesses and entrepreneurs.

Qualified entities can apply for grants between \$250,000 to \$500,000, with a 1:1 match required. DCEO anticipates selecting up to 10 awards. **Applications will be accepted until November 28, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.** To view the NOFO and apply for the grant, please visit the [DCEO website](#). Interested parties are encouraged to reach out to [CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov) for application assistance.

## Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Public Infrastructure

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is soliciting applications for the 2023/2024 Public Infrastructure Grant opportunity funded by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). The purpose of grants relative to the Public Infrastructure (PI) Notice of Funding Opportunity is to fund water and sanitary systems and storm sewer construction projects that alleviate public health, safety, and public welfare and help communities with substantial low to moderate-income populations.

Project areas must be primarily residential in character. Projects that are designed to benefit a commercial/business area are not eligible.

All grant funded projects must meet the following requirements:

1. Low-to-Moderate Income Benefit Requirements: Projects must benefit at least 51.0 percent low-to-moderate income (LMI) persons. Those projects benefiting less than 51.0 percent LMI persons will not be considered for funding.
2. Documentation of Threat to Health and Safety: Projects must address present conditions that affect public health and safety.
3. Water and Sewer Rates: Water or sewer rates must currently meet or exceed 1 percent of the Median Household Income (MHI) per 5,000 gallons. This requirement does not apply to storm sewer or drainage projects.

For more information and to apply click [here](#). **Applications are due January 19, 2024.**

### **Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) – Housing Rehabilitation**

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is soliciting applications for the 2023/2024 Housing Rehabilitation Grant opportunity funded by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The purpose of grants relative to the Housing Rehabilitation (HR) Notice of Funding Opportunity is to provide units of general local government with funds to address housing needs of eligible low-to-moderate income (LMI) households. The program targets projects which preserve singlefamily, owner-occupied housing needing rehabilitation and encourage neighborhood revitalization.

As this is a direct benefit activity, 100 percent of CDBG housing rehabilitation funds must benefit low-to-moderate income persons. CDBG funds can be used to rehabilitate only those homes occupied by families verified to be of low-to-moderate income. Project must rehabilitate a minimum of eight (8) homes. Applications must demonstrate the need for housing rehabilitation and support for the proposed project from eligible residents of the project area. Need should be demonstrated through the submission of surveys, completed within 24 months of the application filing date. Resident support can be demonstrated through submission of public meeting minutes and/or resident signup sheets.

For more information and to apply click [here](#). **Applications are due January 19, 2024.**

### **CEJA Contractor Incubator Hubs**

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) launched \$21 million in funding for the Clean Energy Contractor Incubator Program or "CEJA Contractor Incubator Hubs." The program establishes a network of 13 community-based hubs across the state offering incubator services designed to assist clean energy contractors – especially those from underserved areas – grow their businesses.

The CEJA Contractor Incubator Hubs is CEJA's central small business support program among a highly interconnected set of statewide clean energy workforce development and community support programs. The Hubs will provide a variety of services to contractors and clean energy small businesses, including access to low-cost capital, training, mentorship, networking opportunities and other business-related assistance. The program prioritizes support for business owners and contractors from historically marginalized backgrounds as well as entrepreneurs located in environmental justice communities.

Through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), qualified entities can apply for grants, with awards ranging from \$500,000 to \$2.5 million. **Applications will be accepted until December 11, 2023, at 5:00 p.m.** To view the NOFO and apply for the grant, please visit the [DCEO website](#). Interested parties are encouraged to reach out to [CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov) for application assistance. A [Technical Assistance Webinar](#) will be held on October 20, 2023, at 9:00 a.m.

Qualified entities include community-based organizations such as non-profit organizations and accredited public colleges or universities that have experience providing business-related assistance, knowledge of the construction and clean energy trades, have a record of effectively serving diverse populations, and have established relationships within the local area. The Hubs will be located in the 13 geographic areas designated by statute: Alton, Aurora, Carbondale, Champaign, Chicago (South Side), Chicago (Southwest and West Sides), Danville, Decatur, East St. Louis, Joliet, Peoria, Rockford, and Waukegan. DCEO anticipates identifying at least one grantee to administer the program in each of the 13 locations.

### **LIHEAP Program for Energy Bill Assistance**

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) are encouraging additional income-eligible families to apply for the Low-Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to support with utility bill assistance for natural gas, propane, and electricity. Applications expanded November 1 to include income-eligible households that are disconnected or facing imminent disconnection. Eligible families including those that are disconnected or facing imminent disconnection can apply by visiting [helpillinoisfamilies.com](http://helpillinoisfamilies.com) or by visiting their local agency (a list of partners throughout the State can be found [here](#)). Families can also call 1-833-711-0374 for assistance in 30 languages.

All families who meet the qualifications and provide proper documentation will receive support until funding is exhausted. Families who earn up to 200% the federal poverty level, have a household with a senior, a child or children under 6, and/or a person with a disability, along with households that provide proper documentation of disconnection or imminent disconnection from a utility are now eligible to receive support through LIHEAP. A chart with eligible income thresholds can be found on the [webpage](#). Income-eligible households in addition to October priority period households and households that are disconnected or facing imminent threat of disconnection will be able to apply for assistance during the upcoming application opening period December 1, and **applications will be accepted through August 15, 2024, or until funds are exhausted**. The energy bill assistance program offered through the Help Illinois Families Program in program year 2024 will provide \$237 million to eligible families for energy bill assistance.

This year, the tiered application system was reinstated to ensure families most in need are able to apply first. The first group eligible to apply is expected to represent more than half of households that apply for the program.

- **October 2** – Income-eligible households who fall under the following categories:
  - Households with seniors age 60+
  - Households with a documented long-term disability
  - Households with children under age 6
- **November 1** – Income-eligible households who fall under the following categories:
  - October priority period households
  - Households that are disconnected
  - Households facing imminent threat of disconnection
- **December 1**
  - All income-eligible households

LIHEAP provides one-time payments directly to energy service providers on behalf of recipients. While the amount of support varies based on the needs of individual families, last year over 311,000 households received LIHEAP, with an average of over \$1,000 per household.

#### **Additional Program Information:**

The State of Illinois offers various programs to support eligible low-income families with utility assistance. These programs are open to ALL eligible low-income Illinois families who meet the criteria, including undocumented families. Programs for eligible families include:

- **One-Time Direct Vendor Payment:** All LIHEAP recipients receive a one-time payment.
- **Crisis/Reconnection Assistance:** Funding is available for families in heating-related emergency situations.
- **Furnace Assistance:** Based on funding availability, Furnace Assistance may be provided to households that do not have an operating furnace for their residence.
- **Home Weatherization Program:** The Illinois Home Weatherization Assistance Program (IHWAP) helps low-income residents and households conserve fuel and reduce energy costs by making their homes and apartments more energy efficient.

#### **Information for Families to Apply:**

Families eligible to apply November 1 include:

- Families who meet the income eligibility guidelines AND have a household that meets at least one of the following categories:
  - October priority period households with at least one senior (60+), person with a disability, child, or children under 6
  - Households that are disconnected
  - Households facing imminent threat of disconnection

To apply, visit [helpillinoisfamilies.com](https://helpillinoisfamilies.com) to fill out and submit a request for services form online OR visit your local agency (a list of partners throughout the State can be found [here](#)). After you submit the form, someone from your local agency will be in touch. Call 1-833-711-0374 for assistance at any point during the application process. Additional information about eligibility and criteria can be found on the [website](#) along with fact sheets in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

**For a complete list of current DCEO grant opportunities, upcoming grant trainings, video resource library and Grant Help Desk assistance, visit [DCEO Grants \(illinois.gov\)](https://illinois.gov)**

Business Resiliency Grant Program [click here](#) **Deadline December 31, 2023**

Illinois Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program (CEJA) [click here](#) **Deadline March 31, 2024**

SBIR/STTR Match Program [click here](#) **Deadline June 30, 2024**

Illinois Energy Transition Navigators Program (CEJA) [click here](#) **Deadline rolling**

Federal Grant Support Program [click here](#) **No specific due date**

Illinois Meat and Poultry Supply Chain Grant Program [click here](#) **Deadline rolling**

CDBG Economic Development Program [click here](#) **Deadline rolling**

Connect Illinois Broadband Grant [click here](#) **Deadline rolling**

## Other Federal and State Agency Grants & Programs

### **Illinois EPA Public Light-Duty EV Fast Charging Infrastructure Grant**

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) Director John J. Kim announced the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA) EV Charging Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the purchase and installation of new Direct Current Fast Charging (DCFC) light-duty electric vehicle charging stations at publicly accessible locations. This opportunity is being made available through Governor Pritzker's bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan for electric vehicle projects authorized under CEJA. The NOFO and related documents have been posted to the [Illinois EPA website](#).

Illinois EPA anticipates funding a percentage of projects with awards for electric DC fast charging stations to be located at publicly accessible locations (shopping centers, retail stores, gas stations, etc.). This round is expected to fund 675 fast charging ports.

Each application must include a minimum of two charging station locations, with at least two standalone chargers at each charging station location. Additional points will also be awarded to projects at a charging station location in an area identified as an equity investment eligible community through the [IEC mapping tool](#). At that link, communities qualify for the additional points if they are in either an EJ or an R3 Community. They do not need to be in both.

Eligible applicants include private organizations (including sole proprietorships, partnerships, corporations, and limited liability companies) that are incorporated under Illinois law and registered and in good standing with the Illinois Secretary of State. Eligible applicants must be an owner of a proposed charging station location and/or an owner of the proposed charging station.

All required forms and information can be found on the Driving A Cleaner Illinois webpage: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/air-quality/driving-a-cleaner-illinois.html>. Applications for the Driving a Cleaner Illinois – Climate and Equitable Jobs Act EV Charging NOFO will be accepted November 3, 2023 through **5:00 PM (CST) on December 22, 2023**.

All applicants must pre-qualify through the [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act Grantee Portal](#).

### **Illinois EPA Energy Efficiency Projects Grant**

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Director John J. Kim announced the Residential Energy Efficiency Trust Fund Grant Program – previously known as the Low-Income Residential Energy Efficiency Program or LIREE - with up to \$5,000,000 in funding available for energy efficiency upgrades at single family or duplex residential properties. The Energy Efficiency Trust Fund Grant Program will benefit residents receiving housing assistance from a state or federal housing assistance program and located in areas of environmental justice concern. A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has been posted to the [Agency's website](#).

Eligible applicants include public housing authorities, units of local government (municipalities, counties, or townships), or nonprofit organizations. Examples of eligible projects include window replacement, heating and cooling equipment retrofits, and lighting upgrades. Total project costs may range from \$25,000 - \$500,000 with a match requirement subject to total funding request.



**Applications for the Energy Efficiency Trust Fund Grant Program NOFO will be accepted on a rolling basis** and eligible properties will receive funding on a first come, first serve basis. For eligibility and application information, visit: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/energy/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-trust-fund-grant.html>.

Before applying to the grant program, applicants must be pre-qualified through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal, <https://gata.illinois.gov/>.

The grant program will invest funding from the State of Illinois Energy Efficiency Trust Fund (20 ILCS 687/6-6). The Energy Efficiency Trust Fund was established to benefit residential electric customers through projects determined to reduce energy demand.

### **Illinois EPA Second NOFO for Residential Sharps Collection Programs**

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) Director John J. Kim today announced an additional funding opportunity to provide grants to units of local government for the collection and disposal of household sharps from their residents. Household sharps include needles, syringes, and lancets that residents use in their homes for medical purposes. Through the grant program, Illinois EPA will reimburse grantees that operate a sharps collection station as defined in Section 3.458 of the [Illinois Environmental Protection Act](#). A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has been posted at <https://gata.illinois.gov/grants/csfa.html?page=Opportunity.aspx&nofo=2642>.

A total of \$750,000 in grant funding is available, up to \$35,000 per applicant, to cover expenses local governments incur in collecting and disposing of household sharps. Eligible expenses include costs to obtain collection containers for use by individual residents, collection receptacles at sharps collection stations, and the proper disposal of collected sharps. All required forms and information can be found at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/waste-management/waste-disposal/medication-disposal/sharps.html>.

**Applications for the Residential Sharps Collection Program will be accepted through 5:00 PM (CST) on December 9, 2023.** Please note that applicants must be pre-qualified through the [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act \(GATA\) Grantee Portal](#) before applying for a grant.

### **Illinois Housing Development Authority Emerging Housing Developers Program**

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) launched the Next Generation Capacity Building Initiative (Next Gen), a new program designed to expand the talent pipeline and increase diversity within the housing development field and related industries. Next Gen will provide training and technical assistance to expand access to pre-development financing and housing resources administered by the state, with a focus on reducing barriers to entry for developers of color in the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit (LIHTC) program. This joint initiative between IHDA and LISC is part of the Authority's continuing efforts to support the capacity and growth of a diverse pool of affordable housing developers in Illinois. Applications from Black, Indigenous, or People of Color (BIPOC) developers seeking to participate in the Next Gen training program can be found [here](#).

LIHTC has long been the primary engine behind the development of affordable housing and provides most of the capital available to developers of affordable housing each year. However, the technical knowledge, high cost of entry, and relationships required to develop tax credit properties have historically made it challenging for new developers, and particularly developers led by BIPOC, to access this resource. The Next Gen initiative seeks to address this disparity by lowering the systematic barriers BIPOC developers encounter in three key ways.

**Applications will be accepted through 5 p.m. on Friday, December 1, 2023.** More information on the application process, participant eligibility, and program details will be available [here](#).

### **Clean School Bus Rebate Program**

The 2023 Clean School Bus Rebate program is now open! **Applications are due January 31, 2024, 4:00 PM ET.** For more information visit <https://www.epa.gov/cleanschoolbus/events-related-clean-school-bus-program>. As a reminder, potential applicants should check their SAM.gov registration and ensure it is still valid or renew if it is set to expire soon! This is the first step in order to apply.

The major updates to this round of rebates from the previous two CSB funding opportunities are:

- An updated lottery process where approximately 60% of funds will be available for prioritized applicants with approximately 40% to other applicants.
- Certain eligible applicants can use funds for ADA-compliant wheelchair lifts.
- Certain eligible applicants can use funds for high bus delivery costs.
- Changes in funding levels per bus and applicant prioritization criteria.

For more information visit : <https://ev.illinois.gov/communities.html>

### **Illinois Arts Council Agency Arts and Foreign Language Education Planning Assistance Grant**

The [Illinois Arts Council Agency](#) (IACA), in cooperation with the [Illinois State Board of Education](#) (ISBE), is pleased to announce that funding is available for school districts and other eligible applicants in fiscal year 2024 (FY24) with the Arts and Foreign Language Education Planning Assistance Grant. The Arts and Foreign Language Education Grant Program (AFL) is designed to assist school districts and other eligible applicants with the development or enhancement of curricular programs in the arts or foreign language.

The Illinois Arts Council Agency has released a Request for Proposals (RFP) to solicit proposals from eligible applicants that seek resources to develop district-based plans for initiating, strengthening, or expanding instruction in the arts or foreign language. Annual grant awards will not exceed \$40,000 depending on programmatic needs, size of district, and level of planning to take place. **Proposals are due December 5, 2023.**

To access the RFP, visit [www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL](http://www.arts.illinois.gov/AFL).

### **Office of the State Fire Marshal Small Equipment Grant**

The OSFM will award \$4 million to eligible fire departments and ambulance services for the purchase of small firefighting and ambulance equipment. **All interested departments should send an application to OSFM electronically or postmarked no later than December 15, 2023.**

The Small Equipment Grant Program was established to provide grants of up to \$26,000 to eligible departments. The grants allow eligible applicants the opportunity to purchase small tools and equipment. 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.

All 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 from September 2021 through August 2023 for this grant period. Additional information including the application can be found here: <https://sfm.illinois.gov/iam/firedepartment/grants-and-loans.html>

Completed applications should be submitted to: Office of the State Fire Marshal, Small Equipment Grant Program, 1035 Stevenson Drive, Springfield, IL 62703

### **Illinois EPA Electric Vehicle Rebate Program Funding Update!**

The current number of EV Rebate Program applications that have been received by the Illinois EPA has surpassed the amount of available Fiscal Year 2024 funding appropriated by the General Assembly (\$12 million). As specified in the law, program rules, IEPA EV Rebate Program website, and FAQ, rebate applications are subject to the availability of funds. Applicants that qualify as “Low-Income” per the program guidelines will continue to be prioritized for rebate issuance.

As required under CEJA, Illinois EPA will prioritize the review and award of rebates for low-income purchasers. Low-income is defined as persons and families whose income does not exceed 80 percent of the State median income, as established by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. A table with current income thresholds is included in the application instructions.

The Illinois EPA’s EV Rebate [website](#) includes a [Frequently Asked Questions \(en Español\)](#) document to answer questions about the program. Individuals seeking receipt confirmation should send their application and support document via certified mail.

Individuals interested in receiving updates on Illinois EPA’s EV programs may register for the EV Listserv at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/ceja/electric-vehicle-rebates.html>

### **Illinois Department of Employment Security Workshare Illinois**

WorkShare IL is a voluntary program that provides employers facing a decline in business with an alternative to layoffs. The program allows an employer to reduce the number of hours worked in any unit of their business in order to avoid permanent layoffs. Each employee in an affected unit continues to work but experiences a reduction in hours that ranges from 20% to 60%. Employees receive a corresponding percentage of unemployment benefits during the period of temporary reduction to offset the reduction in earnings.

#### **Resources**

- If you are an employer and want to apply, please go to the [WorkShare e-Services](#) website or contact the [WorkShare Program](#)
- Illinois statute authorizing WorkShare/Short-time compensation program, [820 ILCS 405/502](#)
- Background information from the [U.S. Department of Labor](#)

## Helpful Resources

### **Grant Help Desk Resources DCEO Office of Accountability**

- Office Hours for Grantees – Office of Accountability is hosting a weekly office hour **every Tuesday from 2-3pm** for any questions grantees or potential grantees may have.
  - [Sign up for any of these sessions with this link](#)
- **Email Us:**
  - [ceo.granthelp@illinois.gov](mailto:ceo.granthelp@illinois.gov)
  - Or use our Inquiry Form:  
<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/df9d38efa4e241218ced486c54f3c109>
- **Visit Our Website:**
  - <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities.html>
  - Browse our Learning Libraries, Quick Reference Guides, and Instructional Videos

### **Grant Accountability and Transparency (GATA)**

- GATA Grantee Portal: <https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>
- GATA Grantee Portal New User Guide:  
<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Documents/Resource%20Library/GATA%20New%20User%20Guide.pdf>
- GATU Resource Site: <https://gata.illinois.gov/>
- Catalog of State Financial Assistance (CSFA): <https://gata.illinois.gov/grants/csfa.html>
- DCEO Current Grant Opportunities: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/grants.html>

Audit Report Review Process Manual:

<https://gata.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/gata/documents/audit/audit-manual-august-2018-revision.pdf>

### **DCEO Website – <https://dceo.illinois.gov>**

The Illinois DCEO website includes a page dedicated to current state and federal grant opportunities as well as Grantee resources. Click [here](#) to find valuable information!

Do you have questions about ARPA NEU funding?

To ask a question or request a support call, contact the NEU Support Team at either [ILARPA@crowe.com](mailto:ILARPA@crowe.com) or [CEO.CURE@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.CURE@illinois.gov).

To ask a question about the U.S Treasury Reporting Portal, please contact [covidrelieflsupport@treasury.gov](mailto:covidrelieflsupport@treasury.gov)

### **Join DCEO's Team**

DCEO's Team is expanding around the state. To apply for these jobs, please go to the Work4Illinois website at <https://illinois.jobs2web.com/> and use the search function to find the positions for our department.

**Posting closing 11/29/23**

Human Services Grants Coordinator II, Opt. A – Office of Community Assistance – Sangamon County

**Posting closing 12/1/23**

Accountant Advanced – Office of Employment & Training– Sangamon County  
Assistant Grants Manager (ICDR 1) – Office of Broadband Development– Sangamon County

### **Following DCEO & Connecting with Team RED**

If you have upcoming meetings or events and would like DCEO to participate, please reach out to us. Follow us on our social media channels for real time updates.

**Facebook** – [facebook.com/IllinoisDCEO](https://facebook.com/IllinoisDCEO)

**Linked In** – [linkedin.com/company/IllinoisDCEO](https://linkedin.com/company/IllinoisDCEO)