



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Southwest Region Weekly Update January 20, 2023

DCEO Grants & Programs

Route 66 Grant Program – Round 2 – due January 31

DCEO is pleased to release a [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) for round 2 of the Route 66 Grant Program](#). This NOFO will award grants to certified convention and visitors bureaus for the development of tourism, education, preservation, and promotion of the 100th anniversary of Route 66 in 2026. Since 1926, Route 66 defined a remarkable era in our nation's history and it lives today in Illinois' many Route 66 roadside attractions, museums and restaurants. Route 66 is one of the most famous roads in America. Generations of travelers have romanticized this highway as a symbol of unlimited mobility and freedom of the road. Its iconic status is enhanced by the unprecedented volume of music, books, films and other art forms that depict it as the essence of America's highway culture.

This funding opportunity provides the certified convention and visitors bureaus along the route to partner and develop projects which will enhance the Route 66 experience in Illinois. Preference will be given to projects that:

- Develop new or enhance existing attractions that elevate the Route 66 experience in Illinois by adding new Route 66 tourism attractions and visitor services along the Route
- Support improved wayfinding for visitors traveling Route 66
- Strengthen future tourism trends that includes electrified transportation (i.e., electric vehicles)
- Provide statewide marketing efforts by the convention and visitors bureaus working together to promote the entire Illinois portion

Please click [here](#) for more information on the opportunity. **Grant applications under this NOFO are due by 5pm on January 31, 2023.**

Energy Transition Community Grant

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity is pleased to announce the release of a [Notice of Funding Opportunity \(NOFO\) for the Energy Transition Community Grant Program](#). The Energy Transition Community Grant Program will provide grants to communities in an area where a closure or reduced operation of a fossil fuel power plant, coal mine, or nuclear plant, has occurred or has been announced. The Energy Transition Community Grant Program was created by the Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA, P.A. 102-0662), signed into law by Governor Pritzker on September 15, 2021. Information on the program, and application materials can be found at the [DCEO Grant Opportunities page](#).

This opportunity will entail a two-phase application process:

- In Phase 2, Phase 1 applicants that have been provided an approved funding amount will prepare a more detailed application, with a project narrative and budget that includes specifics on their intended use of the grant award. **The deadline for Phase 2 applications will be April 12, 2023.**

For questions on the program and the application process, email CEO.CEJACommTransition@illinois.gov

Federal Funding to Support Small Businesses

The U.S. Department of the Treasury announced that Illinois will receive up to \$354.6 million to administer four programs as part of the State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI). The expanded program offering through SSBCI will enable Illinois to support small businesses across the state - helping them attract more capital investment and expand or launch business operations, while supporting key sectors. All of the new programs will launch in the coming months.

Advantage Illinois (AI) Loan Participation Program (Existing Program)

Advantage Illinois' existing Loan Participation Program provides low-interest loans to small businesses by partnering with local lenders located across the state. In 2022 as of December, 71 percent of AI loans have gone to businesses owned by people of color, women, people with disabilities or veterans.

Advantage Illinois (AI) Loan Guarantee Program (New Program)

Advantage Illinois' new Loan Guarantee Program will support business applicants who are having difficulty gaining access to capital by using funds to guarantee a percentage of loans provided by partner lenders. By guaranteeing a percentage of the loan, it makes loans more attractive to lenders and has the potential to increase the funds received by the businesses.

INVENT Venture Capital Program (VCP) (New Program)

Innovation Venture Fund (INVENT) will operate as a direct equity program with a focus on investing in businesses in key industries such as agriculture, ag tech, information technology, life sciences, manufacturing, quantum, and more.

Climate Bank Finance Loan Participation Program (New Program)

This new program will be overseen by DCEO and administered by the Illinois Finance Authority (IFA), which will partner with local lenders to issue the loans. Climate Bank funds will be available to small businesses in the clean energy sector.

The programs will launch in the near future; interested businesses should fill out [this form](#) to receive additional information and updates when the programs are launched.

Grant Match Program to Spur Innovation in Cutting Edge Technologies

Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced \$5 million in state-funded matching grants for businesses who have received federal funding through the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) or Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) programs.

The federal [SBIR & STTR](#) programs provide grants for research and development (R&D) to small businesses to encourage private sector innovation in emerging technologies. R&D represents a critical business expense that can be costly and presents a potential risk for small businesses that don't have large sums of capital. By providing

grants that support R&D, the programs encourage innovation in emerging technologies that could benefit the federal government as well as the commercial marketplace.

The state-funded SBIR/STTR Matching Grant Program is designed to further increase capital for SBIR/STTR recipients in Illinois - stimulating high-tech innovation and commercialization for Illinois small businesses that are conducting cutting-edge research. Illinois currently has more than 100 SBIR/STTR federal recipients who may be eligible for a state matching grant of up to \$50,000 per project.

DCEO is currently accepting applications from businesses who have received a Phase I federal SBIR/STTR grant award. Applicants are eligible to receive up to \$50,000 in matching grants, with the option to re-apply and receive up to five awards for each federal Phase I award received (one per fiscal year). **Awards will be granted on a first-come-first-serve and rolling basis.** Interested companies can learn more [here](#).

Meat & Poultry Supply Chain Capital Grant Program

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced a new \$6 million capital grant program designed to strengthen the meat and poultry supply chain by helping independently owned meat processing companies in Illinois build capacity and create and retain jobs. Through the Meat & Poultry Supply Chain Capital Grant Program, companies are eligible for grants of \$250,000 to \$1.5 million, with a company match of at least four times the amount awarded. The Meat & Poultry Supply Chain Capital Grant Program aims to support communities by helping independently owned companies build capacity, create jobs and ultimately, strengthen our meat processing supply chain in Illinois, thereby making food products more affordable and accessible. Eligibility is restricted to plants that are not operated by the four largest meat processing companies that own most of the nation's meat processing market share. Through the program, companies can receive funding for the construction of a new facility, expanding or renovating existing facilities, and modernizing processing and manufacturing equipment. As part of DCEO's commitment to equity, the application process prioritizes applicants located in underserved and rural areas.

Grants will be issued on a rolling basis; interested parties can find more information on the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) [here](#).

Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE)

Online with OMEE – Overview of Financial Resources for Small Businesses

Wednesday | **February 1, 2023** | 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. | [Register](#)

Team OMEE will provide you with the latest updates on financial resources, federal and state programs, share information about other opportunities, and answer any questions you may have about your business. We'll take questions in English and Spanish.

Cannabis Social Equity Loan Program

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced that \$8.75 million in Direct Forgivable Loans fully financed by the State will be made available to all conditionally-approved social equity loan applicants in order to provide immediate access to capital. Pending the completion of a simplified documentation process, forgivable loan amounts between \$50,000-\$500,000 will be released immediately. A total of \$8.75 million will be available through the new Direct Forgivable Loan Program. The following loan amounts are available per participant based on the business type:

- **Craft Growers:** \$500,000

- **Infusers:** \$250,000
- **Transporters:** \$50,000

For more information contact CEO.CannabisLoan@Illinois.gov.

Metro East Community Navigators

Reach out to any of our community navigators for help applying for a grant or other funding program.

Jo Ann Di Maggio May
Small Business Development Center at SIU-E
gdimagg@siue.edu 618.650.2929

Lakishia Brooks
Community Wellness Project
lbrock@cwpsstl.org 314.421.9600

Kristen Shinn/Edda Berti
Puentes
Puentes@hoyleton.org 618.398.0557

Edie Koch
Monroe County Economic Development
ekoch@mciledc.com 618.806.4739

Paul Ellis
Fairview Heights Economic Development
ellis@cofh.org 618.489.2033

Sara McGibany
Alton Main Street
sara@altonmainstreet.org 618.463.1016

Kesha Chatman/Jason Humphreys
Urban League of St. Louis
kchatman@urbanleague-stl.org 618.274.1150

Henri Harper
National Development Council
hharper@ndconline.org 319.936.6611

Becky Wayne
Jersey County Business Association
becky@jcba-il.us

Economic Development Tools to Build Your Community Webinar

Date and time: **Thursday, January 26th, 2023 10:30 am** | (UTC-05:00) Central Time (US & Canada)

Register link: https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7AWHZ2LtQDaRyTY4cXBI5g

Join DCEO Small Business Community Navigator Grantee, Business Navigator Alliance of South Central and Southeastern Illinois and industry leaders for an overview of economic development tools such as Tax Increment Financing Districts, Business Districts and Enterprise Zones to build your community. Adam Stroud, Senior Project Manager with PGAV Planners, a community planning consulting firm in St. Louis, will lead the discussion about how resources like TIF, Business Districts and Enterprise Zones can work together to create lasting community assets. Todd Hull, City of Effingham Economic Development Director and Brittny Gipson, Dieterich Village Clerk will share regional examples of how leveraging Tax Increment Financing, Business Districts and Enterprise Zones have strengthened and grown their community's residential, industrial and commercial systems.

Workforce Resources

Supply Chain and Logistics Training

Is your company involved in Supply Chain and Logistics? Do your front-line employees need training for advancement? Madison County Employment and Training along with St. Clair Intergovernmental Grants have received a federal grant to train local employees at **no cost** in a 9 county region starting in January 2022. The training will be conducted by SIU Edwardsville, Lewis & Clark Community College, Southwestern Illinois College, and Kaskaskia College. The training consists of four 8 hour days, 1 day a week over a 4 week period. The employees will be trained on Introduction to Supply Chain, Inventory Management, Warehousing and Transportation, and Management/Leadership. If interested, please contact Justin Jackson with Madison County Employment and Training at 618-296-4533 or jjackson@co.madison.il

Other Grants & Programs

Illinois Housing Development Authority Mortgage Assistance Program – due January 31

The Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) announced it is reopening a mortgage assistance program designed to assist homeowners financially impacted by the pandemic on Tuesday, November 1, 2022. The Illinois Homeowner Assistance Fund (ILHAF) provides up to \$30,000 in mortgage assistance to eligible homeowners — paid directly to the servicer, taxing body or other approved entity — while homeowners work to regain their financial footing. Whether homeowners have a mortgage, a reverse mortgage, or are mortgage-free, the program can fund past due housing payments and up to three months of prospective mortgage payments.

The program is free and funds do not need to be repaid. Application, program information and updates can be found at illinoishousinghelp.org. Applications will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, **January 31, 2023**.

To qualify for ILHAF assistance, Illinois homeowners must have experienced a financial hardship due to the COVID-19 pandemic after Jan. 21, 2020 (including a hardship that began before Jan. 21, 2020, but continued after that date). They also must currently own and occupy their home in Illinois as their primary residence, be at least 30 days late on their monthly housing payments and have a household income at or below 150% of the area median income.

Potential applicants must demonstrate they have either communicated with their mortgage provider about their inability to pay, or sought counseling with a HUD-approved counseling organization. Interested homeowners are strongly encouraged to attend an information session hosted by IHDA or one of our housing partners. The session schedule is posted online at illinoishousinghelp.org, for those without access to a computer or the internet, please contact the ILHAF hotline at 1-866-IL-HELP (866-454-3571).

Illinois EPA County Solid Waste Planning Grant

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) Director John J. Kim today announced a new funding opportunity to assist counties and other units of local government in implementing their solid waste planning obligations under the Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act (SWPRA). A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has been posted to the [Illinois EPA website](https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/waste-management/materials-management/Pages/County-Solid-Waste-Planning-.aspx).

Under the SWPRA, counties and units of local government are obligated to revisit their Illinois Solid Waste Management Plans every five years and, if necessary, submit plans with significant updates to the Illinois EPA. The Illinois EPA Material Management and Compliance Section is responsible for reviewing any solid waste management plans with significant updates submitted pursuant to the SWPRA. Through this funding opportunity, Illinois EPA intends to provide interested counties, and other units of local government required to develop a county solid waste management plan, financial assistance to help prepare the next plan update.

Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, conducting a local solid waste and materials management needs assessment, surveying local solid waste and materials management stakeholders to determine programmatic expansion viability, internally authoring solid waste management plan updates, or procuring consulting services to prepare solid waste management plan updates. Each county or unit of local government is eligible for up to \$10,000 in funding. All required forms and information can be found at:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/waste-management/materials-management/Pages/County-Solid-Waste-Planning-.aspx>.

Applications for the County Solid Waste Planning Grants will be accepted January 17, 2023 through 5:00 PM (CST) on **March 3, 2023**.

Applicants may not apply for a grant until they are pre-qualified through the [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act \(GATA\) Grantee Portal](#).

Small Business Administration (SBA) Flooding Disaster Loans

Low-interest disaster loans from the [U.S. Small Business Administration](#) (SBA) are available to businesses Illinois following the announcement of a Presidential disaster declaration due to a severe storm and flooding that occurred July 25-28, 2022.

The disaster declaration covers St. Clair County in Illinois, which is eligible for Economic Injury Disaster Loans from the SBA. Small businesses and most private nonprofit organizations in the following adjacent counties are eligible to apply only for SBA Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDLs): Clinton, Madison, Monroe, Randolph and Washington in Illinois; and St. Louis County and St. Louis City in Missouri.

Businesses and private nonprofit organizations of any size may borrow up to \$2 million to repair or replace disaster-damaged or destroyed real estate, machinery and equipment, inventory, and other business assets. For small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, small businesses engaged in aquaculture and most private nonprofit organizations, the SBA offers [Economic Injury Disaster Loans \(EIDLs\)](#) to help meet working capital needs caused by the disaster. Economic Injury Disaster Loan assistance is available regardless of whether the business suffered any physical property damage.

To be considered for all forms of disaster assistance, applicants should register online at [DisasterAssistance.gov](#) or download the FEMA mobile app. If online or mobile access is unavailable, applicants should call the FEMA toll-free helpline at 800-621-3362. Those who use 711-Relay or Video Relay Services should call 800-621-3362. Applicants may apply online using the Electronic Loan Application (ELA) via SBA's secure website at <https://disasterloanassistance.sba.gov/ela/s/> and should apply under SBA declaration # 17677.

Disaster loan information and application forms can also be obtained by calling the SBA's Customer Service Center at 800-659-2955 (if you are deaf, hard of hearing, or have a speech disability, please dial 7-1-1 to access telecommunications relay services) or sending an email to DisasterCustomerService@sba.gov. Loan applications can also be downloaded from sba.gov/disaster. Completed applications should be mailed to: U.S. Small Business Administration, Processing and Disbursement Center, 14925 Kingsport Road, Fort Worth, TX 76155.

The deadline to return economic injury applications is **July 14, 2023**.

Statewide PACE Program - Clean Energy Renovations and New Construction

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Finance Authority announced the launch of a statewide PACE (Property Assessed Clean Energy) program to spur investment in electric vehicle charging stations, energy efficiency, and water conservation, and to stimulate the growth of renewable energy and resilient building design throughout Illinois. The Illinois Finance Authority PACE program, now available to all Illinois counties and municipalities, is designed to reduce costs, improve service delivery, and create uniformity in Illinois' Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) financing market.

Under Illinois law, counties, cities, villages, and incorporated towns may create PACE areas at the request of for-profit and non-profit owners of commercial, industrial, and multi-family (of 5 or more units) properties. C-PACE

financing can be used by owners and developers of commercial properties to finance or refinance eligible clean energy improvements in connection with the renovation of existing buildings and new construction, in each case up to 25% of the value of the property. Counties and municipalities interested in learning more about the Illinois Finance Authority PACE Program are encouraged to visit its website [here](#). Contact Brad Fletcher (bfletcher@il-fa.com) to opt into the Illinois Finance Authority PACE Program for free!

IDOT Building Blocks of Success

The Illinois Department of Transportation is hosting [free](#) virtual workshops in January as part of its continuing Building Blocks of Success series for Disadvantaged Business Enterprise firms interested in strengthening their skills, growing their business and bidding on state projects. New and existing DBEs, as well as firms interested in becoming certified in the program are invited.

January workshop dates and topics are:

- January 24, 10 a.m. to noon: Marketing and Networking
- January 31, 10 a.m. to noon: IDOT EPAS System - SOIs

Future topics covered will include Excel estimating and bidding spreadsheet, bidding on the IDOT website, contracts, steps needed to be certified as a DBE firm and more.

Building Blocks of Success will continue through April. Workshop information, including dates and times, is available through Eventbrite at bit.ly/DBEworkshops. Advance registration is required. Questions can be directed to IDOT's DBE Resource Center at (312) 939-1100.

Administered by IDOT, the DBE program provides minorities, women and other eligible small businesses opportunities to participate in highway, transit and airport contracts that are federally and state funded. For more information on becoming a certified DBE and learning more about IDOT resources that are available, visit www.idot.illinois.gov/dbe.

Helpful Resources

GettingAroundIllinois.com - statewide road conditions this winter

With cold weather settling in, the Illinois Department of Transportation is reminding the public to visit and bookmark GettingAroundIllinois.com for updated information on road conditions. GettingAroundIllinois.com is available on your computer and optimized for smartphones. The site includes the ability to identify and zoom in on a location, travel route or destination on a state map. For more information, visit idot.illinois.gov.

Join DCEO's Team RED

DCEO is also 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 1/24/23

Venture Capital Program Manager (SPSA, Opt. 1) Cook County

Posting closing 1/27/23

Public Service Administrator (Aisa Trade Specialist) - Office of Trade & Investment – Cook County

Postings closing 1/30/23

Executive II (Apprenticeship Initiative Manager) 2 vacancies - Office of Illinois Works – Sangamon County
VCP Investment Coordinator (Industrial & Community Development Representative II) Sangamon County
VCP Platform Coordinator (Industrial & Community Development Representative II) Cook County
Emerging Tech Manager (SPSA Opt. 1) Cook County

Following DCEO & Connecting with Team RED

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

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

Twitter – twitter.com/IllinoisDCEO

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

DCEO Website – <https://dceo.illinois.gov> <- new website address

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!

DID YOU KNOW? Illinois has a new [EV website](#)! Check it out!