



## Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

### Northeast Region Weekly Update April 7, 2022



The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) through its Offices of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) and Regional Economic Development (RED), is partnering with two Illinois organizations, [American Arab Chamber of Commerce](#) and [Arab American Business & Professional Association](#), to celebrate Arab American Heritage Month throughout April. DCEO will highlight Arab American-owned businesses across the state of Illinois and celebrate the contributions of Arab-American communities across the state.

### Webinar

#### **Access to Capital: Resources for Arab American Businesses to Grow and Thrive**

Wednesday | April 27, 2022 | 10:00-11:30 AM | [webinar](#)

In partnership with the [Arab American Chamber of Commerce](#), OMEE & Illinois SBDC Network presents a monthly webinar series called Advancing the Development of Minority Entrepreneurship (ADME), an informative workshop experience targeting marginalized communities where subject matter experts in the field of business share information with Illinois entrepreneurs in order to help them be successful.

Come learn about funding opportunities both through grants and loans as well as information about who can assist you with accessing capital.

#### **American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPA) for Non-entitlement Units (NEU) of Local Government – Program Updates**

Through the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA), Illinois received an allocation of \$742 million in Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds ("CLFR") to distribute to more than 1,250 non-entitlement units (NEUs) with populations under 50,000. For more information, please visit <http://illinois.gov/dceo/neu>

Now that the US Treasury portal is live and the project and expenditure report is due April 30<sup>th</sup>, our team will host daily, drop-in virtual office hours to help answer any reporting questions you may have or to help troubleshoot navigating the Treasury portal.

### **Virtual Office Hours Schedule:**

- Beginning on April 7<sup>th</sup> through April 28<sup>th</sup> – Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 1pm
- Beginning on April 11<sup>th</sup> through April 29<sup>th</sup> – Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays @ 9am

### **To Join\*:**

Zoom link: <https://crowe.zoom.us/j/96048614581?pwd=Mk8vU2pXRWtWYStiSGtpU3pEN09Gdz09>

Meeting ID: 960 4861 4581

Passcode: 954776

*\*We highly recommend joining via computer for portal navigation support and screen share capabilities.*

If you need assistance regarding compliance issues, please continue to contact us via email or visit the main site listed below. Thank you.

### **NEU Support Team**

[ILARPA@crowe.com](mailto:ILARPA@crowe.com) or [CEO.CURE@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.CURE@illinois.gov)

<http://illinois.gov/dceo/neu>

## **Regional Planning to Spur Economic Recovery (RISE) Program**

Through the launch of the Research in Illinois to Spur Economic Development (RISE) initiative, the State will offer competitive grants to help local governments and economic development organizations (EDOs) create new regional or local plans to promote economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. After the grants are awarded and plans are created, DCEO will offer grantees the opportunity to apply for funding for specific projects included in their plans. This program is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

With the RISE Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), DCEO is seeking grant applications to accelerate Illinois' economic recovery by developing new or updating local, regional, or community-centered economic plans. Grant awards will vary according to the proposed coverage areas as indicated below:

- \$10,000 to \$75,000 for coverage areas with populations of up to 75,000 residents
- \$10,000 to \$150,000 for coverage areas with populations of more than 75,000 residents

Grants will reimburse awardees for costs associated with developing an economic recovery plan, including salaries or contractual costs, research, outreach, and public meetings as well as expenses associated with administering the grant, such as meeting space rentals and printing. The [NOFO application](#) is open and will continue accepting applications through **May 9, 2022**. DCEO is accepting applications from units of local government and economic development organizations. The program calls for plans that will address job losses and business closures, adaptation to shifting economic trends in the area, and critical economic and public health infrastructure. Applications for recipients that face financial and capacity constraints, or that propose a plan for an area with a concentration of underserved communities or a high impact of COVID-19 will be prioritized for an award.

Plans will be required to include specific initiatives or capital investments that will accelerate recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and that are eligible for ARPA funding. Regions covered by plans can have a regional scope or be more focused on a community level. Grantees will be required to assemble stakeholders to represent a community or region, conduct research on prospective economic assets and challenges, conduct outreach with local and regional stakeholders, and develop strategies that address the impacts of COVID-19 and that are tailored to the

strengths and vulnerabilities of the community and region. Where possible, community plans developed through the RISE program should align with goals and areas of focus included in the Governor Pritzker's 5-year Economic Plan to Revitalize the Economy.

The deadline to apply for the Research in Illinois to Spur Economic Development (RISE) Grant Program is **May 9, 2022**. DCEO hosted an overview and technical assistance session on the new program on March 17<sup>th</sup>. A recording of this event can be found [here](#). **Team RED will be offering another RISE technical assistance session as part of our monthly office hours in April. That webinar will be April 14, 2022 at 10:00 am. You can register for the office hours [here](#).**

## Join DCEO's Team

DCEO is also expanding our staff in the Springfield and Chicago offices including for Team RED and Team OMEE. We are accepting applications on the following positions right now. 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.

- [SBDC Director – Senior Public Service Administrator Option 1](#) – Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation, & Technology – Sangamon County (posting closes 4/11/22)
- [Public Infrastructure Program Manager - Public Service Administrator Option 1](#) – Office of Community Development – Sangamon County (posting closes 4/11/22)
- [Office Coordinator Opt. 2](#) – Office of Community Development – Sangamon County (posting closes on 4/21/22)

## Expanding Access to Capital in Illinois: How Illinois Financial Institutions can drive profit and purpose through the Illinois Advantage Illinois Loan Program

Please join the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity for a conversation around how local financial institutions can partner with the State of Illinois to drive small business growth and access to capital for minority owned businesses. Advantage Illinois provides low interest loans to small businesses in Illinois for start-up costs, working capital, equipment and inventory. Learn how your bank can participate in this program using your own underwriting standards and loan processes. Through the American Rescue Plan, the State Small Business Credit initiative (SSBCI), recently received an increase in funding to help bolster access to capital in Minority Communities, the only way we can be successful is through a robust banking network.

Date/Time: April 19, 2022 10:00 am

Presented by: John Hill, Advantage Illinois Program Manager

Hosted by: Kala Lambert, DCEO Southeast Region Manager

Register at: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/onstage/g.php?MTID=e210c5bd12971ecc5b1a88b0f567f5a5d>

Date/Time: April 26, 2022 10:00 am

Presented by: John Hill, Advantage Illinois Program Manager

Hosted by: Joe McKeown and Manny Lopez, DCEO Northeast Regional Economic Development Representatives

Register at: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/onstage/g.php?MTID=e01a8fd2787cc216878010cb03ff1d648>

Date/Time: May 3, 2022 11am

Presented by: Mark Schultz and John Hill, Advantage Illinois Team

Hosted by: Chris Connors, DCEO Northwest Region Manager

Register at: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/onstage/g.php?MTID=e907c1e0ecbde4e98f7b48f30c1718fd6>

## Connect Illinois Round 3 Funding Now Open

The Round 3 Connect Illinois funding opportunity is now open. The \$350 million available through the third round largely mirrors requirements of the first two notice of funding opportunities, with the exception that grant matching minimums will no longer be a requirement for applicants. The program's merit review process places value on qualified projects that also include significant nonstate match, thereby incentivizing applicants to contribute as much nonstate match as possible. To promote program efficiency and effectiveness, the maximum grant award will increase from \$5 million to \$10 million, with applicants invited to seek multiple grant awards over the next several years.

Through this funding opportunity, the Department will fund proposals that support broadband deployment to expand and strengthen existing broadband network infrastructure, health information technology, telemedicine, distance learning, and public safety. Applications should be classified under one of three categories: (a) Broadband Access for Illinois homes, businesses, and community anchor institutions in unserved or underserved areas; (b) Broadband Innovation for economic development and related applications; or (c) Urban Broadband for expanded access and/or innovation in qualified Illinois cities or metropolitan areas of 75,000 residents or more.

Applications will be accepted and reviewed under this program on a rolling basis while funding is available. For more information, check out the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) on our [website](#).

## Back to Business Grant Program

**The application portal has now closed for this program.** DCEO is continuing to review the applications that have been received and making awards in this \$250 million program. Awards will continue to be awarded on a rolling basis. Thus far, we have provided \$201 million in Back to Business grants to 5,333 small businesses. All the information on this program and a list of grantees can be found on our website [here](#). Businesses with applications awaiting review should continue to watch their email for messages from A4CB/Loanwell.

## Following DCEO & Connecting with Team RED

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. We are working on our schedules for 2022 and have a lot of exciting programs on the horizon, so please let us know if you are interested in partnering with us to provide program information to your organization and region. I also encourage you to follow us on our social media channels for real time updates.

## Team RED Virtual Office Hours for 2022

DCEO's Team RED is changing up how we hold office hours in 2022. Beginning in February, office hours will be held the **second Thursday of every month at 10 am**. These sessions are designed to present brief information on a program topic as well as open times that the Team is available to provide you with the latest updates and answer any questions you may have on state or federal programs. If the monthly time does not work for you,

please reach out to your regional Team RED representative. We're always here to help. Our April office hours will provide information on the RISE program noted above as well as other DCEO updates.

DCEO April Office Hours – RISE program and DCEO program Updates

Date and Time: April 14, 2022 at 10 am

Register: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/onstage/g.php?MTID=ecf46c9f738a355f6acd91247c1eb8186>

## USDA's Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program

USDA's Rural Innovation Stronger Economy (RISE) Grant Program offers grant assistance to create and augment high-wage jobs, accelerate the formation of new businesses, support industry clusters and maximize the use of local productive assets in eligible low-income rural areas. Funds may be used to build or support a business incubator facility; provide worker training to assist in the creation of new jobs; train the existing workforce with skills for higher-paying jobs; and develop a base of skilled workers and improve their opportunities to obtain high-wage jobs in new or existing local industries. The RISE project must serve a rural region small enough to allow close collaboration among partners. It also must include important elements of the region's prioritized industry cluster.

**Potential Applicants:** Eligible applicants are rural jobs accelerator partnerships with expertise in delivering economic and job training programs, consisting of the following:

- Non-profit entities
- State entities
- Tribal entities
- Institutions of higher education
- Public bodies

**How Much:** \$500,000 – \$2,000,000

**Deadline:** April 19, 2022

[Apply Now](#)

## IDOT Building Blocks of Success

The Illinois Department of Transportation is hosting free virtual workshops as part of its continuing Building Blocks of Success series for firms interested in participating in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, strengthening their skills and bidding on state construction projects.

The workshop dates and topics are:

- April 5, 10 a.m. to noon: Understanding Insurance & Bonding Requirements, Part 1
- April 6, 10 a.m. to noon: Understanding Insurance & Bonding Requirements, Part 2
- April 12, 10 a.m. to noon: Scheduling Work
- April 21, 10 a.m. to noon: Avoiding Pitfalls
- May 4, 10 a.m. to noon: How to... IDOT Electrical Work

Workshop information is available through Eventbrite at [bit.ly/DBEworkshops](https://bit.ly/DBEworkshops). Advance registration is required. Questions can be directed to IDOT's DBE Resource Center at (312) 939.1100.