



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Northeast Region Weekly Update April 22, 2022

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), through its Offices of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) and Regional Economic Development (RED), continues to partner with two Illinois organizations, [American Arab Chamber of Commerce](#) and [Arab American Business & Professional Association](#), to celebrate Arab American Heritage Month this month. For more information, check out our [website](#).

American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPA) for Non-entitlement Units (NEU) of Local Government – Daily Virtual Office Hours Through April 29!

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 30th**, 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 7th through April 28th – Tuesdays and Thursdays @ 1pm**
- **Beginning on April 11th through April 29th – 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 or CEO.CURE@illinois.gov

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

Upcoming OMEE Events & Webinars

Arab American Heritage Month

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

Wednesday | April 27, 2022 | 10:00-11:30 AM | [webinar](#) | View on [Facebook Live @illinoisdceo](#)

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.

Spanish-Language Information Session for Small Businesses – April 28

Don't miss out on the upcoming Spanish-language information session on April 28 to learn more about financing opportunities for small business owners. This session will provide information about financing through the Advantage Illinois program, which provides low-interest loans to small businesses. During the session, participants will learn how to apply, and how to get support during the application process.

Join us from 11am-noon on [Facebook Live](#) or via [WebEx](#) on April 28.

**PROVIDE BOTH ENGLISH AND SPANISH TRANSLATIONS.*

Sesión informativa en español para pequeñas empresas – 28 de abril

No se pierda la próxima sesión informativa en español el 28 de abril para obtener más información sobre oportunidades de financiamiento para propietarios de pequeñas empresas. Esta sesión brindará información sobre el financiamiento a través del programa Advantage Illinois, que brinda préstamos a bajo interés a pequeñas empresas. Durante la sesión, los participantes aprenderán cómo presentar una solicitud y cómo obtener apoyo durante el proceso de solicitud.

Únase a nosotros desde las 11 a. m. hasta el mediodía en [Facebook Live](#) o a través de [WebEx](#) el 28 de abril.

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**.

Join DCEO's Team

DCEO is also expanding our staff in the Springfield and Chicago offices. 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.

- [Executive 2 \(Pre-Apprenticeship Grant Manager\)](#) – 2 vacancies – Office of Illinois Works – Cook County (posting closes on 4/27/22)
- [Industrial & Community Development Representative I](#) – Office of Business Development– Sangamon County (posting closes on 5/4/22)

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 26, 2022, at 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, at 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>

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 \$210 million in Back to Business grants to 5,708 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

Team RED Virtual 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.

Business Navigator Alliance - Housing Development Webinar

The Business Navigator Alliance of Southcentral and Southeastern Illinois is hosting a webinar covering housing development. Attendees will learn about incentive programs offered through the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity and the Illinois Housing Development Authority. We will then speak with the Mayor of Paris, IL and a representative from Laborer's Home Development Corporation on their recent housing development projects. You'll gain the perspective from both sides of the table towards a public/private partnership and how that relationship works.

Thursday | April 28 | 10:30 am

Register: [Here](#)

Pritzker Administration Launches \$309 Million Assistance Program for Illinois Homeowners

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA) announced this week the opening of the Illinois Homeowner Assistance Fund (ILHAF) to help homeowners who have fallen behind on monthly mortgage payments and/or related housing expenses because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Struggling homeowners will be eligible for up to \$30,000 in free assistance to pay past due mortgage payments, property taxes, property insurance, and delinquent homeowner and/or condo association fees.

Homeowners in need of assistance can find more information on program eligibility and begin an application at www.illinoishousinghelp.org. **Applications will be accepted until 11:59 p.m. on Tuesday, May 31, 2022.**

Administered by IHDA, ILHAF is designed to assist homeowners facing mortgage delinquency, default, or foreclosure. To qualify, Illinois homeowners must have experienced a financial hardship caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, such as lost income or increased expenses, on or after Jan. 21, 2020. They must also currently own and occupy their Illinois home as their primary residence, be at least 30 days behind on their mortgage or other homeowner expenses and have a household income at or below 150% of the Area Median Income. Homeowners in communities that have been disproportionately impacted by the health and economic effects of the pandemic will be prioritized in the distribution of assistance.

IHDA has partnered with more than 35 non-profit housing counseling agencies, community-based organizations, and legal aid groups across Illinois to help homeowners overcome technological and/or language barriers or are already in the foreclosure process. This technical assistance is provided at no cost and is available in more than 37 languages, including American Sign Language. Homeowners who need help preparing for their application can visit www.illinoishousinghelp.org or call 866-454-3571 to connect with a ILHAF program partner.

To be eligible to apply, homeowners must have consulted with a HUD-certified housing counselor or spoke to their mortgage servicer about their mitigation options beginning January 1, 2022. A certificate from a HUD-certified housing counselor or a letter from a mortgage servicer detailing efforts to resolve the delinquency is required to have an ILHAF application reviewed.

When ready to apply, homeowners should also have the following documentation to ease their application process:

- Proof of identification, including but not limited to a driver's license, state ID, permanent residency card or other form of ID.
- Proof of household income, including but not limited to tax returns, pay stubs, or other documentation.
- Proof of occupancy, including but not limited to a bank statement, cell phone bill, credit/debit card statement, or other documentation.
- Proof of ownership, including but not limited to a property tax bill, property deed, or other documentation.
- Delinquency statement, including but not limited to a mortgage statement, property tax statement, insurance statement, or HOA/Condo Association statement.

More information on the application process, including videos on how to apply, a complete list of required documents, and a list of participating housing counselors, can be found at www.illinoishousinghelp.org.

ILHAF is federally funded through an allocation to the state of Illinois in the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (P.L. 117-2). This program builds upon several homeowner and renter assistance efforts undertaken by the Pritzker

administration, including the Emergency Mortgage and Rental Assistance Programs in 2020 and the Illinois Rental Payment Program in 2021. Together these programs will deliver more than \$1 billion in emergency rent and mortgage payment assistance to Illinois households during the pandemic.

For more information and updates on the ILHAF program, please visit www.illinoishousinghelp.org