



**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

JB Pritzker, Governor

Northeast Region Weekly Update May 13, 2022

If you like hot weather, welcome to May in Illinois! We continue to celebrate World Trade Month and Asian American & Pacific Islander Month. Check out all the great webinars and events we have scheduled throughout May below as well as updates on current funding opportunities. If you have any questions or need additional information, please reach out to us anytime. We are always here to help!

Aly Grady – New Acting Deputy Director for DCEO Team RED

Aly Grady is the new Acting Deputy Director leading DCEO's Regional Economic Development (RED) Team. Before taking on this new role last week, Aly Grady has served as the Central Illinois Regional Manager on Team RED. In the Central Illinois Regional Manager position, Aly works with local governments, community partners, businesses, and other entities to serve the needs and promote economic development of a 12-county region in Central Illinois. Aly has been working in state government for over 20 years and brings a wealth of knowledge and experience into this role to further the mission of DCEO. In addition, Aly is a Central Illinois native having grown up in Mattoon and currently living in the Springfield area. You can reach Aly at 217-299-8853 or at Alyson.grady2@illinois.gov

Agnes Masnik – New Northeast Member

Agnes Masnik is the newest Regional Manager joining the Northeast Regional Economic Development Team. Agnes has worked in state government for 20 years, most recently with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity in various roles from Business Development Operations Manager, Regional Economic Development (Assistant Deputy Director and Northern Stateline Manager) and Communications Manager. Prior to DCEO, Agnes worked for the Illinois Senate and is currently a resident of Lake County. You can reach Agnes at 312-882-6840 or at Agnes.Masnik@illinois.gov

Economic Development Week 2022 - Driving Economic Recovery, Inspiring Innovation, and Igniting Impact!

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity celebrated Economic Development Week May 9th to May 13th. During this week, we recognized the contributions made by professional economic developers to create more economically vibrant and livable communities throughout the State of Illinois.

To showcase these contributions, the [Illinois Economic Development Week 2022 Handbook](#) highlights the public, private and industry coordination that is required to drive business expansion, workforce development and community investment in Illinois. Check out the link above and share this booklet with your communities!

World Trade Month

DCEO and the Office of Trade and Investment is celebrating World Trade Month throughout May.

Global Market Forecast: Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa, Middle-East, Americas

Tuesday, May 17, 2022, 9:00am until 10:30am Central Time

Join us for a webinar highlighting global export strategy to assist Illinois exporters with speakers profiling five regions in this year's global market forecast. As the world transitions out of the pandemic, interest in exporting is on the rise. To assist Illinois exporters in their global export strategy, the Office of Trade and Investment will profile five regions in this year's global market forecast: Asia-Pacific, Europe, Africa, Middle East and the Americas.

Illinois exported \$66 billion globally in 2021, an increase of 117% in the last two decades. Join us for a session on economic forecasts for the regions, export opportunities, market challenges and insights for solutions.

In this webinar you will get an overview of the economic prospects, sector opportunities, and insight into the challenges and solutions for each region.

Presenting speakers include:

Sylvia Garcia, Director, Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

Ashley Ndir, Senior Commercial Liaison, African Development Bank

David T. Olsen, National Chair, American Chamber of Commerce in Canada

Ze'ev Lavie, Director, Int'l Trade Relations Division Federation Israeli Chambers Commerce

Kyungsoo Dan Kim, Global Asia Team Leader, U. S. Department of Commerce

Ricardo J. Peláez, Counselor for Commercial Affairs, U.S. Mission to the European Union, Brussels

Miguel Angel Leaman Rivas, General Director/CEO, Agencia PorMexico

Register at <https://bit.ly/3j5g0je>

For information about trade missions and other resources available through the State of Illinois' Office of Trade and Investment, please visit <https://bit.ly/3KAtv5Y>

Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month Webinars

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) will celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month throughout May 2022. DCEO, through its Offices of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) and Regional Economic Development (RED), will present virtual events featuring business resources, highlight the AAPI community's resilience and contributions to Illinois, and recognize AAPI businesses.

Illinois Changemakers Creating Companies: A Conversation with Health Tech Entrepreneur Sona Shah, CEO & Co-founder of Neopenda

Thursday | May 19 | 8:00-9:00 PM | [webinar](#)

From developing a prototype for a bio-design class in grad school to co-launching a global health tech company, Neopenda CEO and Co-founder Sona Shah is a changemaker entrepreneur who is saving lives. With designing

innovating medical technology for under-resourced communities in emerging markets to fighting the COVID-19 pandemic, Sona's visionary leadership has been featured in *Crain's Chicago Business*, *Fast Company*, *Forbes, Inc.*, and in many more publications for hers and Neopenda's impactful work. Join us to hear Sona's entrepreneurial journey and her ideas for how you can launch and grow your own business!

This virtual event is presented by the South Asian American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois (SAACCIL) & the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO)-Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) during DCEO's Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month 2022.

Let's Rise Together: How to Support Illinois' AAPI Community

Tuesday | May 24, 2022 | 12:00-1:00 PM | [webinar](#)

Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) leaders and community members nationwide have continued to combat anti-Asian sentiment, as hate crimes and harassment skyrocketed nearly 340% in 2021. Illinois AAPI leaders and organizations have remained resilient and coalesced to fight AAPI hate through education, empowerment, and action. The Teaching Equitable Asian American Community History (TEAAC) Act, a first of its kind legislation that prompts schools to teach AAPI history, has proved monumental. Join us to hear directly from AAPI leaders about how all Illinoisans can rise together to support Illinois' AAPI community members.

From International Student to Tech Entrepreneur: A Conversation with Chowbus

CEO & Co-founder, Linxin Wen

Tuesday | May 24, 2022 | 7:00-8:00 PM | [webinar](#) in Mandarin

While studying in Illinois as an international graduate student, Linxin Wen co-launched in 2016 Chicago-based food delivery startup Chowbus to highlight small, independent restaurants featuring authentic Asian cuisine. Since launching, Chowbus has raised close to \$62 million in investments, grown its operations throughout the U.S, and expanded the product from delivery only to the restaurant's POS and full-service platform. Join us to hear Linxin's best practices and ideas!

This virtual event in Mandarin is presented by the Coalition for a Better Chinese American Community (CBCAC) and the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO)-Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) during DCEO's Asian American and Pacific Islander Heritage Month 2022.

Upcoming OMEE Events & Webinars

Online with OMEE - Overview of financial resources for small businesses

Wednesday | May 18, 2022 | 2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. | [webinar](#)

Is access to capital for your business important to you? The OMEE Business Development Managers invite you to an online conversation that's open to all racial/ethnic minorities, women, persons with disabilities, veterans, LGBTQIA+ owned businesses and all other marginalized groups. We 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 will take questions in English and Spanish.

Grow Your Online Business in 2022: From Experts Who Have Done the Work

Wednesday | May 25, 2022 | 10:00 – 11:00 AM | [webinar](#)

Interested in starting an online business or are you a current e-commerce owner looking to increase your revenue? Join us to learn directly from experienced e-commerce owners who will share their experiences and advice from running an online business through social media, Amazon, and additional e-commerce platforms.

This virtual event is presented by the Illinois Small Business Development Center at Chinese Mutual Aid Association during the May *Advancing the Development of Minority Entrepreneurship* (ADME) series, which is a monthly series co-hosted by DCEO-Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) & the Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC).

Certification Workshop – Minority, Woman, Person with Disabilities or Veteran Owned Business

Tuesday | May 17, 2022 | 9:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. | Online and In-person - The Centre of Elgin – West Conference Room, 100 Symphony Way, Elgin | [Register](#)

Hosted by City of Elgin and Elgin Area Chamber of Commerce in partnership with DCEO-OMEE.

Learn the process, benefits and advantages of becoming a Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Certified Vendor with the State of Illinois. BEP assists businesses owned by minorities, women, veterans, and people with disabilities gain access to the State's procurement process. BEP certification can also open the door to opportunities with other private/public entities which are looking for diverse suppliers including: City of Chicago, Chicago Transit Authority (CTA), IL Dept of Trans., METRA, PACE, Cook County, and more! Find out how to achieve certification as a BEP giving your business the ability to increase capacity and grow revenue.

When you register let us know if you are attending via online or in-person.

[Sign up to receive updates from OMEE](#) - Please [click here](#) to sign up.

American Rescue Plan Funds (ARPA) for Non-entitlement Units (NEU) of Local Government

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

NEU Support Team ILARPA@crowe.com or CEO.CURE@illinois.gov
<http://illinois.gov/dceo/neu>

For assistance with the U.S Treasury Reporting Portal, please contact covidreliefITSsupport@treasury.gov.

Illinois Homegrown by Heroes

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) is aiding veterans or current active-duty service members who are interested in a second career in our state's number one industry, agriculture. The Illinois Department of Agriculture and The Farmer Veteran Coalition would like to invite you to become an Illinois Homegrown by Hero.

The Homegrown by Heroes program allows Illinois farmers, ranchers, fishermen and producers who have served or are still serving in any branch of the U.S. military to use a special logo on the agricultural products they sell to the public. This special designation sets these farmers apart in the market, allowing these heroes' products to be visible to consumers while giving them the chance to tell their story.

The Homegrown by Heroes program is a free program for veterans, with a 3-year renewal. For those who qualify, the Homegrown by Heroes Illinois Product logo can be used to identify and market their Illinois grown, and Illinois made products on packaging, signage, websites, and social media or wherever their items are being sold. It also

will grant access to the education and training offered through the program, everything from mentorships with experienced farmers to assistance developing value-added products.

The program is a collaborative effort between the Illinois Department of Agriculture, Illinois Farm Bureau and Farmer Veteran Coalition to thank military veterans for their service and to create meaningful career opportunities for current and former service members who want to become farmers and help feed our great nation.

To become an Illinois Homegrown by Hero please complete the [application](#) and return to Nicole.Moore@illinois.gov or mail to Illinois Department of Agriculture, State Fairgrounds, C/O Nicole Moore, Bureau of Marketing, Promotion and Grants, P.O. Box 9281, Springfield, IL 62794 or call (217) 524-9129.

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.

- Industrial & Community Development Representative 1 – Office of Grants Management: Tourism – Sangamon County posting date has been extended to **5/16/22**.
- Executive 2 (BEP Compliance) – 2 vacancies – Office of Grants Management – Sangamon County (posting closes 5/16/22)
- Account Technician 2 – Office of Financial Management – Sangamon County (posting closes 5/16/22)
- Human Resources Representative – Office of Human Resources – Sangamon County (posting closes 5/16/22)
- Executive 2 (Tax Credit Manager) – Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology – Sangamon County (posting closes 5/18/22)
- Public Service Administrator, Opt 1 – Office of Communication & Information – Cook County (posting closes 5/18/22)
- Public Administration Intern (Target Title: PSA, Opt 1 Req#13664) – Office of Employment & Training – Sangamon County (posting closes 6/1/22)
- Workforce System Integration Manager (Public Service Administrator, Opt 1 (Target Title for Public Administration Intern Req#13641)) – Office of Employment & Training – Sangamon County (posting closes 6/1/22)

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.

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

Community Development Block Grants – Economic Development

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program was established by the federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974 (Act). Administered nationally by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), the Act combined eight existing categorical programs into a single block grant program. In 1981, Congress amended the Act to allow states to directly administer the block grant for small cities. At the designation of the Governor, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (Department) assumed operation of the State of Illinois CDBG – Small Cities Program in the same year. Through this program, funds are available to assist Illinois communities to meet their greatest economic and community development needs, with an emphasis on helping persons of low-to-moderate income. To ensure that the State-administered program meets the intent of the federal Housing and Community Development Act of 1974, as amended, Congress has required that state-administered programs meet at least one of the following three national objectives:

- Benefiting low-to-moderate income (LMI) persons; or
- Aiding in the prevention or elimination of slums and blight; or
- Meeting other community development needs that pose a serious and immediate threat to the health and welfare of the community.

To complement these federally-mandated objectives, the State has established the following specific objectives for the CDBG Program:

- Strengthen community economic development through the creation of jobs, stimulation of private investment and strengthening the tax base;
- Improve public infrastructure and eliminate conditions which are detrimental to health, safety and public welfare; and
- Conserve and expand the State's housing stock in order to provide a decent home and a suitable living environment for persons of low-to-moderate income and the developmentally disabled. The purpose of grants relative to the Economic Development (ED) Notice of Funding Opportunity are to assist communities attract or expand private businesses. The program provides financial assistance in the form of a grant to private businesses that create or retain jobs primarily for low to moderate-income workers. Public infrastructure grants may also be made to support a private business that creates or retains jobs

primarily for low- to moderate-income workers. This assistance can benefit both private "for-profit" and "not-for-profit" organizations.

Grants are awarded on an as-needed basis throughout the year to units of general local government meeting eligibility and program component requirements until all funds allocated to this program have been distributed. All awards in this category are predicated upon project feasibility and a demonstrated need for funds. This will include a review of all sources and uses of funds, an analysis of the recipient's ability to comply with the terms of the program, and a determination that CDBG participation is appropriate. The grant ceiling has been established at \$1,000,000 per award. The grant funds awarded shall not exceed \$10,000 per job for any job that is retained and \$25,000 per job for any job that is created.

For your application to be considered, your entity must be pre-qualified. For more information on pre-qualification, please visit <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/AboutDCEO/GrantOpportunities/Pages/GranteeResources.aspx>.

Additional information including the Notice of Funding Opportunity and application documents can be found [Here](#)

IDPH Activating Relationships in Illinois for Systemic Equity (ARISE)

The Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced up to \$3.7 million in grants are available for communities outside of Cook County to address and implement COVID-19 health equity strategies.

The federally funded program, Activating Relationships In Illinois for Systemic Equity (ARISE), is a joint initiative of IDPH's Center for Minority Health Services and The Center for Rural Health, in collaboration with [Well-being and Equity \(WE\) in the World](#). It invites organizations to address the long-standing health inequities in their communities that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Up to 15 community collaborations of three or more partners and their associated local health department will be awarded up to \$235,000 to address and to implement a health equity strategy in the context of COVID-19. Up to 25 additional communities will receive \$10,000 microgrants to advance health equity.

ARISE, funded by the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), is intended to support socio-economically disadvantaged and historically marginalized communities outside of Cook County that have been disproportionately impacted by COVID-19.

The selected ARISE Community Equity Zone communities will engage in an intensive "learning-and-doing" capacity building program to advance health equity in the short, medium, and long term. Communities will be offered technical assistance and relational accompaniment by [WE in the World](#) to develop and to implement a balanced health equity strategy using the newly released [Pathways to Population Health Equity](#) framework, as well as gain access to "best in class" data, storytelling, and engagement and communication support. The program is designed to assist communities to build a strategy to:

- Improve the mental, physical, social and spiritual health and well-being of communities experiencing equity gaps in the context of COVID-19.
- Address underlying [vital community conditions](#), such as access to meaningful work and wealth, humane housing, and reliable transportation, that perpetuate health inequities.
- Address root causes of health inequities, such as racism and an inequitable economy.
- Building civic capacity and infrastructure for long-term systemic change.

TO APPLY:

Applicants are encouraged to attend a series of informational webinar sessions to learn more and to qualify to apply for the grants:

May 18, 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. CDT About ARISE and how to build your health equity team

May 25, 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. CDT Assessing community needs/identifying community equity zones

June 1, 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. CDT Assessing your community collaboration and preparing to apply

Applications open June 1, 2022, and are due by 5 p.m. CDT **June 27, 2022**

For more information contact IDPH Center for Minority Health Services at dph.cmhs.info@illinois.gov or Veronica Halloway at veronica.halloway@illinois.gov or 217-785-4311 or 217-785-4311.

IDHS Reimagine Public Safety Act (RPSA)

Governor JB Pritzker announced the launch of \$113 million in funding opportunities for community organizations working on violence prevention and interruption across the state. This funding builds on \$73 million already distributed by the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) to organizations in FY22 as well as an additional \$71.8 million in the pipeline, with grant agreements expected to be finalized prior to the summer.

These grant applications are part of a series of funding opportunities to reduce firearm violence by implementing evidence-based solutions.

The Reimagine Public Safety Act (RPSA) is a three-year, multi-pronged approach to violence prevention that calls for research-backed services like summer and afterschool programming, job training and placement, high-risk youth intervention services, violence interruption, case management, trauma-informed mental health care supported by Medicaid, and more.

The funds are available in neighborhoods that have experienced concentrated firearm violence, including 42 areas across the state -- 26 in Chicago and 16 in the suburbs and downstate. The effort is designed to support both short-term needs and address long-term causes of firearm violence to safeguard impacted communities through research-based violence prevention methods.

Community-based organizations that provide services in any of the 42 eligible communities (and follow GATA guidelines) can apply. Applications will be accepted and reviewed on a rolling basis to expedite funding. Organizations interested in this second round of violence prevention funding are encouraged to use free IDHS resources, including navigator and technical assistance programs, webinars, and a GATA app. These resources are available at www.DHS.illinois.gov/Grants.

IDHS is focused on bringing resources into communities to address the epidemic of firearm violence that has impacted too many Illinois communities.

Additionally, the administration is launching a statewide a series of community roundtables. Community conversations will take place in Rockford, Champaign, Peoria, and East St. Louis with local community advisors, faith-based leaders, and elected officials. The Reimagine Public Safety Act requires the Office of Firearm Violence Prevention to convene Local Advisory Councils (LAC) in the 16 RPSA eligible service areas outside of Chicago.

To apply for funding, visit www.dhs.illinois.gov/rpsa.

IEPA Illinois Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Act (SWPRA)

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) Director John J. Kim 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). This funding opportunity follows a recommendation from the Statewide Materials Management Advisory committee that recommended, in its July 2021 report, that the Illinois EPA provide financial support to units of local government to enable them to make meaningful updates to their statutorily required solid waste management plans. A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has been posted to the [Illinois EPA website](#).

The Illinois EPA Waste Reduction and Compliance Section is responsible for reviewing county solid waste management plans 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 \$5,000 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 May 2, 2022 through 5:00 PM (CST) on **June 2, 2022**.

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