



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Northeast Region Weekly Update August 21, 2023

DCEO Grants & Programs

DCEO Celebrates 2023 Black Business Month *Proudly Celebrating the Contributions of Black Businesses in Illinois*

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) launched its annual Black Business Month campaign – developed to celebrate and support Black-owned businesses and entrepreneurs across Illinois. This monthlong celebration includes a webinar highlighting community leaders, organizations, and business enterprises throughout the state, stops on the Statewide Black Business Survey Roadshow, a campaign inviting Illinoisans to “Shop Black-owned Business Saturdays,” as well as company highlights via social media. Additional information about resources and events can be found [here](#).

Throughout Black Business Month, DCEO is honoring the 141,000 Black-owned businesses that employ more than 175,000 people across Illinois, generating \$8 billion in economic activity annually. Promoting and supporting Black-owned businesses through Black Business Month is an important step in addressing the racial wealth gap that continues to persist in the United States.

DCEO Black Business Month Events

This series of virtual and in-person events will provide participants with critical knowledge and resources to spur Black business success and development across Illinois. All events are free to attend; additional information and registration can be found below and on the [DCEO website](#).

Roadshow – Presentations of the Statewide Black Business Survey Report

In February 2023, the first of its kind [statewide Black business survey](#) was released by DCEO and its partner organizations. OMEE will be presenting the findings from the survey in communities across the state, sharing insights that will help us support Black business development and improve the economy for all. There will also be networking and business resources organizations present to assist participants.

The State's Black Business Month activities are presented by the DCEO, Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE). OMEE plays a crucial role in providing support to minority owned businesses of all sizes and types, including connection with grants, technical assistance, and incentives to bolster minority entrepreneurs and minority-owned enterprises. For more information on Black Business Month events planned for businesses, contact Matthew J. Simpson, the African American Business Development Manager, at

Matthew.Simpson@illinois.gov or to learn more about ongoing resources and programs for businesses, follow DCEO on social media @IllinoisDCEO.

2023 DCEO Business Development Roadshow

On behalf of DCEO, Team RED would like to invite you to our 2023 Business Development Roadshow! Over the next 7 weeks, DCEO staff will be hosting meetings in each region of the state to discuss all the recent changes we have made to our business development programs and introduce you to new ones. We want to ensure you have an understanding of resources that are available from the state to assist with business attraction, expansion, and retention. We will cover the new changes to our faithful Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program, introduce you to the new Reimagining Energy and Vehicles program, and cover all the other new programs and changes that have been recently enacted. Below is the schedule and location of each meeting.

Date	Time	Region	Meeting Location	Address	City
7/26/2023	2 pm- 4 pm	Southern	Greater Egypt RPC/ManTraCon Conference Room	3117 Civic Circle Blvd	Marion
8/16/2023	10 am - 12 pm	Northwest	Illinois Valley Community College	815 N Orlando Smith Rd	Oglesby
8/18/2023	10 am - 12 pm	East Central	Parkland College Building D Room 244	2400 West Bradley Ave	Champaign
8/22/2023	2 pm - 4 pm	Southwest	Greater Belleville Chamber of Commerce	216 East A Street	Belleville
8/23/2023	10 am - 12 pm	Southeast	Koerner Distributor	1601 Pike Ave	Effingham
8/24/2023	9:30 am - 11:30 am	Northeast Region	College of Lake County ATC (Atrium)	7735 Grand Ave, Gurnee IL 60031	Gurnee
8/28/2023	1 pm - 3 pm	Northeast Region	Illinois Room - First Floor	555 W Monroe	Chicago
8/30/2023	10 am - 12 pm	North Central	Heartland Bank, 4th Floor Community Room	200 W College Ave	Normal
8/31/2023	1:30 pm - 3:30 pm	Northern Stateline	City of Rochelle- City Hall	420 N. 6th Street	Rochelle
9/6/2023	10 am - 12 pm	West Central	WIU Main Campus	518 Stipes Hall • 1 University Circle	Macomb
9/7/2023	10 am - 12 pm	Central Region	Lincoln Land Community College Trotter Center	2400 Millennium Drive	Springfield

We respectfully request that you RSVP for the event you wish to attend by sending an email to CEO.TeamREDInquiries@illinois.gov and letting us know which date you want to attend. Please put "ROADSHOW" in the subject line. We hope you can join us and look forward to a robust discussion with you.

If you cannot attend one of these meetings, Team RED will be hosting an encore virtual presentation on **September 21, 2023 starting at 10:00 am** as part of our monthly office hours series. To register for this webinar event, [click here](#).

Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program

DCEO has launched \$10 million in funding for the third round of the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program. The Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program provides training opportunities, expands the talent pipeline, and boosts diversity in the construction industry and building trades. Grantees will be selected through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) process.

The latest round of funding will focus on awarding grants in geographic areas without pre-apprenticeship programs, while increasing the representation of underrepresented groups that are not served or are underserved by existing programs, including Asian Americans, veterans, and women.

Through Illinois Works, DCEO is expanding its statewide network of providers to recruit, prescreen, and provide pre-apprenticeship skills training. The program providers offer structured pathways and manage the program graduates' transition from the pre-apprenticeship program to a full apprenticeship program in construction and building trades. Participants of the program attend tuition-free and receive a stipend and other supportive, barrier reduction services to help enter the construction industry. Upon completion of the program, pre-apprentices receive industry aligned certifications which will prepare and qualify them to continue to a registered apprenticeship program in one of the trades.

Applications are open to all [Economic Development Regions](#), with a focus on expanding capacity in the following areas:

- Central Region (Region 1) – Sangamon County
- North Central Region (Region 3) – Peoria County, McClean County
- Northeast Region (Region 4) – DeKalb County, DuPage County, Kane County, Kankakee County, Kendall County, McHenry County, Suburban Cook County, Will County
- Northwest Region (Region 6) – LaSalle County, Rock Island County, Whiteside County
- Southeast Region (Region 7) – Marion County, Lawrence County
- Southern Region (Region 8) – Jackson County

Eligible applicants include non-profit, community-based organizations, such as industry associations, chambers of commerce, local workforce areas, community colleges, technical schools, and school districts. Experienced and new providers are encouraged to apply, along with existing Illinois Works grantees who propose to serve a different geographic area or Economic Development Region than they were originally contracted to serve. Applicants serving priority Economic Development Regions and underrepresented populations as outlined in the NOFO will be granted extra points during the merit review process.

Qualified entities can apply for grants between \$55,000 to \$550,000. Applications will be accepted until **August 30, 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 for application assistance.

To help applicants prepare to apply for funding, DCEO will also be providing technical assistance in the form of webinars, regional meetings, and FAQ. More information will be posted on the [DCEO website](#).

Business Resiliency Grant Program

The Business Resiliency grant opportunity, funded through the U.S Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant-Coronavirus (CDBG-CV), is now available for County Leads to begin preparing applications. More than \$24 million has been allocated to reimburse eligible businesses for expenses to prevent, prepare for or respond to COVID-19, specifically for activities undertaken to keep them in business during the pandemic. Some examples include tent rental for customers to dine outside, plexiglass partitions between staff and customers, and cashless payment systems. Businesses are eligible for up to \$20,000 and must apply as part of an application from a Lead Local Government within the County. Individual applications from businesses cannot be accepted.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity, Program Guidebook and Application materials may be found at <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3165-2578.html> and specifically the NOFO can be viewed [here](#). Applications may be submitted beginning August 15, 2023 and must be submitted no later than **December 31, 2023**. **Funds are available on a first-come, first-qualified basis until all funds are expended.**

Climate and Equitable Jobs Act (CEJA)

CEJA CLEAN JOBS WORKFORCE NETWORK PROGRAM

The [Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program](#) creates 13 regional Clean Jobs Workforce Hubs ("Workforce Hubs") throughout the State to provide clean energy and related workforce and training opportunities to participants. The program will serve people living in equity eligible communities, as well as people who experience barriers to employment. Community-based organizations that provide employment, skill development or related services,

and that have demonstrated relationships with residents and organizations serving the community are invited to apply.

Through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), qualified entities can apply for grants, with awards ranging from \$1 million to \$5 million (inclusive of CEJA Workforce Hubs and Barrier Reduction Program funding). Applications will be accepted until **September 1, 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 for application assistance.

CLIMATE AND EQUITABLE JOBS ACT (CEJA) WORKFORCE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WEBINAR

Starting August 10th at 11am, the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity will be hosting a series of interactive webinars to engage all potential CEJA grantees. CEJA will be most successful when qualified grantee organizations with experience and strong relationships in the target communities collaborate to provide comprehensive recruitment, training, wraparound support, job placement services and business capacity building. The purpose of this webinar series is to highlight the contractors/economic development CEJA programs and encourage businesses, training institutions, and community-based organizations to meet and consider partnering on CEJA grant applications. To promote identification of potential partners, DCEO has compiled a list of organizations actively seeking partners to jointly apply for at least one CEJA grant [here](#). If your organization is not already listed, you may be added by emailing your request to CEO.CEJA@Illinois.gov.

The webinars are scheduled for one hour, with two half hour components. The first component is a presentation on the various features of the CEJA programs, followed by a half hour breakout session for webinar attendees to network and identify partners. The breakout sessions will be organized by region, so potential partners may connect by geographic proximity. **The webinar series will be held every Thursday at 11am from August 10th through August 31st.** Please share the webinar link [Meeting Registration - Zoom](#) with interested organizations and consider joining us as we equitably build the clean energy workforce and companies of tomorrow.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE AND OFFICE HOURS

Is your organization considering applying for funding to deliver the CEJA [Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program](#) (due September 1)?

Get one-on-one technical assistance at our CEJA NOFO Applicant Office Hours. Applicants, especially those with less experience applying for state workforce funding, are invited to sign up for Technical Assistance Office Hours (via Zoom) to receive one-on-one assistance to prepare their proposals. These Office Hours provide an opportunity to ask questions and get feedback on proposal drafts and ideas. Office hours will begin July 31 and continue into August. [Register here](#).

Please also review the following resources, including an updated [FAQ](#) with responses to applicant questions about the Notices of Funding Opportunities; the [Clean Jobs Curriculum Framework](#); and the [Potential Partner List](#) for contact information from organizations interested in partnering, clean energy employers, and training providers.

Missed one of our information sessions? Watch a recording or view slides here:

Date	Topic	Registration
6/13/23	Bidder's Conference	Recording (YouTube) and Slides (PDF)
6/22/23	CEJA Workforce Ecosystem	Recording (YouTube) and Slides (PDF)
7/17/23	Writing an Effective Proposal	Recording (YouTube) and Slides (PDF)
7/21/23	GATA Training	Recording (YouTube) and Slides (forthcoming)

Questions about the CEJA Workforce Programs? Learn more [here](#), email ceo.ceja@illinois.gov or check out our [FAQ page](#).

Illinois Broadband Lab Summer Series

[Illinois Broadband Lab Summer Webinar Series: Community Roles in Broadband and Digital Equity](#)

Hosted by Illinois Office of Broadband | University of Illinois System | University of Illinois Extension | Benton Institute for Broadband & Society | Illinois Broadband Lab

August 2023 | Thursdays 12PM-1PM CT

The Illinois Broadband Lab and University of Illinois Extension will host a series of webinars throughout summer 2023 to help communities and providers across the state to learn best practices and available grant opportunities for how to increase broadband access, adoption, and application. The webinars will bring together guest experts, helpful resources, and new tools and initiatives for those just getting into the Connect Illinois conversation, as well as detailed assistance for those looking to learn more about grant opportunities and next steps on their broadband projects and goals.

The schedule integrates two tracks, which combine helpful insight and information on broadband and digital equity issues and opportunities (Track A) with detailed guidance on how to apply for and manage an Illinois Office of Broadband grant (Track B):

Please see below for the recording, slides, and grant website / NOFO. Also, information about the remaining series can be found below with a registration link to pass on to those who may benefit from this education.

Recording: https://youtu.be/C_pcGyQ7_9s

Slides: <https://uofi.box.com/s/4xyfnmbs1qhhixhkee2471ms7929e0a4>

NOFO: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/aboutdceo/grantopportunities/3170-2571.html>

Track A – Broadband and Digital Equity Education and Opportunities

Aug 24 – Broadband Funding, Partnerships & Project Development

Aug 31 – Adoption, Affordability & Digital Inclusion

Track A is intended for the general public, designed for those looking to learn how to increase broadband access, adoption, and application to their communities.

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
 - 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

Federal Grant Support Program

The Department's Federal Grant Support Program will make up to \$15 million available to Illinois based businesses and organizations seeking competitive federal grants. Competitive federal grants typically require a match, which is the non-federal share of the project costs that a grantee must contribute to achieve the purposes of the award. In some instances where there is no formal matching requirement, the percentage of the match provided by the grantee is used as a metric for evaluating the competitiveness of an application. The Department may provide a grant up to \$2,000,000 that entails up to a 1:1 match of the applicant's cash contribution towards the project. This matching grant program is intended to encourage more Illinois-based applicants to apply for federal grant opportunities, provide critical assistance to meet the minimum match eligibility requirements, increase the competitiveness of applications, and provide the State of Illinois with an opportunity to make a firm commitment and demonstration of support for projects that are well aligned with the State's economic development goals and priorities. Eligible applicants will apply for this program while they are preparing an application for a federal grant. Successful applicants will then receive a letter of commitment that they will be awarded a Federal Grant Support grant from the Department, contingent on receiving a federal award.

Additional information and the NOFO can be found [here](#). **Application Deadline: Rolling.**

Connect Illinois Round 3 Open & Accepting Applications

Through multiple rounds of competitive matching grants, Connect Illinois seeks to achieve what no other state or federal approach to date has accomplished: ubiquitous broadband access for homes, businesses, and community anchor institutions.

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.

All Connect Illinois projects must include infrastructure expansion scalable to speeds of at least 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload upon deployment.

For Broadband Access projects, proposals covering unserved and/or underserved areas are eligible for Connect Illinois grant funding via this NOFO. An unserved area is an area of Illinois in which households, businesses, or community anchor institutions lack access to wireline broadband service of at least 25/3 Mbps. An underserved area is an area of Illinois in which households, businesses, or community anchor institutions have wireline broadband access of at least 25/3 Mbps but less than 100/20 Mbps

To view the NOFO and apply, click [here](#). **Application Deadline: Rolling.**

Other State Agency Grants & Programs

Illinois EPA Electric Vehicle Rebate Program Funding

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) is announcing that the next funding round for Illinois' Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program **will open Wednesday, November 1, 2023 and run through Wednesday, January 31, 2024**. Individuals that purchase a new or used all-electric vehicle from an Illinois licensed dealer, meet all other eligibility requirements, and apply during the rebate cycle will be eligible for a rebate as long as funds are available. Forms and instructions on submitting a rebate application will be made available on the [Electric Vehicle Rebate Program webpage](#) on **October 18, 2023**.

EV purchasers must apply for a rebate within 90 days of the vehicle purchase date. However, applications will not be accepted or reviewed if submitted or postmarked prior to the **November 1, 2023** rebate cycle start date. Payments will be made to eligible individuals as long as funding is available.

The Illinois General Assembly has appropriated \$12 million to Illinois EPA for the current fiscal year, which ends on June 30, 2024. Actual funding amounts will be determined by the amount of money available in the Electric Vehicle Rebate Fund, not to exceed \$12 million.

Generally, to be eligible for a rebate, the vehicle must be exclusively powered and refueled by electricity, plugged in to charge, and licensed to drive on public roadways. Electric mopeds, electric off-highway vehicles, hybrid electric or extended-range electric vehicles that are also equipped with conventional fueled propulsion or auxiliary engines are not eligible under the program. Eligibility requirements for an EV rebate in Illinois are set forth in the Illinois EPA's regulations at 35 Ill. Adm. Code 275. These requirements include, but are not limited to:

- The purchaser must reside in Illinois at time of vehicle purchase and at the time the rebate is issued.
- An applicant may not previously have received an Electric Vehicle Rebate..
- The vehicle must be purchased from a dealer licensed by the Illinois Secretary of State.
- Rented or leased vehicles do not qualify for the rebate.
- Vehicles purchased from an out-of-state dealership, and vehicles delivered to or received by the purchaser out-of-state are not eligible for a rebate.
- The purchaser must apply for the rebate within 90-days after the vehicle purchase date.
- The purchaser must retain ownership of the vehicle for a minimum of 12 consecutive months immediately after the vehicle purchase date.
- The rebate amount cannot exceed the purchase price of the vehicle.
- Documentation requirements include a copy of purchase invoice, proof of purchase, vehicle registration, and IRS W-9 or W-8 forms.

The Illinois' [Electric Vehicle Rebate Program webpage](#) includes a Frequently Asked Questions document, and other relevant information. Please note, **a new EV Rebate Application form will be posted to the webpage on October 18, 2023, along with instructions for completing the application.**

Questions about the EV Rebate Program may be submitted to EPA.EV@Illinois.gov. Individuals interested in receiving updates on Illinois EPA's EV programs may register for the EV Listserv located at the bottom of the [Electric Vehicle Rebate Program webpage](#).

For information on federal incentives for electric vehicles and charging infrastructure, please visit the [U.S. Department of Energy's Alternative Fuels Data Center](#)

Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology Procurement Webinar

The supplier diversity office at the Illinois Department of Innovation & Technology (DoIT) invites vendors to attend a virtual webinar to discuss "The Small Business Set Aside Program" on Wednesday, **August 23 at 10 a.m. CST.**

During this session, current and prospective vendors will hear from representatives of the Illinois Executive Ethics Commission about the program and how small businesses can take advantage of it. The session will also include a segment for virtual office hours where a supplier diversity employee will be available to answer questions specific to DoIT supplier diversity and procurement.

Interested participants can reserve their spot by registering [here](#). The webinar will be delivered via Cisco Webex. Upon registering, participants will be emailed a calendar invites and login instructions. If you require reasonable accommodations for this webinar, please direct your request to DoIT.Communications@illinois.gov.

IDPH Mental Health Services in Schools Grant

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) announced the State of Illinois is accepting grant applications from schools and agencies that support child and adolescent health for a share of \$10 million in federal funding intended to strengthen mental health services for students across Illinois. The funding from the CDC's COVID-19 Public Health Workforce Supplemental Funding program is being offered to help schools and local agencies improve student care in areas such as workforce enhancements, developing frameworks to prevent adverse childhood experiences, interventions to assist children suffering from trauma, and training for medical and school staff to expand adolescent mental health resources. The funding is authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA) and the application process is being administered by IDPH's Office of Women's Health & Family Services. Following are the two program areas in which funds will be allocated:

- **\$6.9 million for Enhancing Post-Covid Recovery Efforts for School Based Health Needs:** Up to \$500,000 per school district or qualifying school affiliated organization to expand workforces, purchase mental health training materials and deploy programs and resources to enhance student mental health. (Up to 25 grants expected.)
- **\$3 million for Preventing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) Post-COVID-19:** To identify mental health issues within school populations and provide education, resources, care coordination, and or training that helps to develop frameworks to prevent adverse childhood experiences and improve mental health outcomes for children and youth in a post-pandemic world. (Up to 15 grants expected.)

IDPH will be accepting applications from school districts and agencies that support adolescent mental health through September 8. Grant applications will be handled through IDPH's [Electronic Grants Administration & Management System \(EGrAMS\)](#) system.

IEPA Green Infrastructure Grant

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Director John J. Kim announced a grant opportunity with \$10 million in funding for projects that will improve water quality in Illinois. The Green Infrastructure Grant Opportunities (GIGO) Program has been made possible by Governor Pritzker's bipartisan Rebuild Illinois capital plan. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is posted at <https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/8eb59a23-1ba2-4930-acf3-2622dbb7e364>.

The GIGO Program provides funding for projects to construct green infrastructure best management practices (BMPs) that prevent, eliminate, or reduce water quality impairments by decreasing stormwater runoff into Illinois' rivers, streams, and lakes. Projects that implement treatment trains (multiple BMPs in series) and/or multiple BMPs within the same watershed may be more effective and efficient than a single large green infrastructure BMP.

For GIGO, green infrastructure means any stormwater management technique or practice employed with the primary goal to preserve, restore, mimic, or enhance natural hydrology. Green infrastructure includes, but is not limited to, methods of using soil and vegetation to promote soil percolation, evapotranspiration, and filtering or the harvesting and reuse of precipitation. Examples of project types/BMPs that may be funded through GIGO are provided in the NOFO. Illinois EPA anticipates project awards between \$75,000 and \$2.5 million. The first \$5 Million in GIGO grants were awarded to eleven grantees in 2021 and 2022. Four projects have completed construction and the remaining are under construction.

Applications for the GIGO Program are **due by noon on October 18, 2023**. Conference information and registration will be available at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/grants-loans/water-financial-assistance/gigo.html>. Applicants must apply for GIGO through the [GATA Grantee Portal](#).

IDNR Open Space Land Acquisition and Development Grant Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant

The Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) announced applications are being accepted for grants through the Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) and the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant programs.

The OSLAD program is a state-financed grant program that provides funding assistance to local government agencies for acquisition and/or development of land for public outdoor recreation areas. OSLAD is a matching program that provides an advance payment (for development projects only) that is 50 percent of the grant award amount shortly after the grant agreement is executed.

The application period for both programs opened July 3, 2023 and applications must be submitted to the IDNR **by 5:00 p.m. August 31, 2023**. The Notice of Funding Opportunity can be found at <https://www.illinois.gov/sites/gata/Pages/default.aspx>. Consult the IDNR website at <https://www2.illinois.gov/dnr/grants/Pages/OpenSpaceLandsAquisitionDevelopment-Grant.aspx> for more information.

Other grant opportunities offered by IDNR can be found [here](#)

IDOT Safe Routes to School Program

With students soon to be trading swim bags for backpacks, the Illinois Department of Transportation announced that applications for the Safe Routes to School program are now being accepted. The program helps to support projects that make walking, biking and rolling to school a safe option for students as part of a commitment by IDOT and Gov. JB Pritzker to expand active transportation throughout the state.

Administered by IDOT using federal funds, Safe Routes to School advances projects that improve safety and reduce traffic in areas around schools, grades kindergarten through high school. The new grant cycle will distribute a total of \$6 million, with a maximum award of \$250,000. Projects may include new sidewalks, traffic-calming measures and improvements that increase accessibility for those with disabilities.

Successful applications will demonstrate how the projects encourage students to walk, bike or roll. Eligible applicants include school districts, local governments, planning organizations and nonprofit associations. Preference will be given to schools with higher percentages of low-income students and students with disabilities.

The deadline to apply is October 2, with awards to be announced in the spring. For more information on the program, including selection criteria and details on how to register for webinars to assist in the application process, visit the [Safe Routes to School homepage](https://idot.click/SRTS) at <https://idot.click/SRTS> or email DOT.SafeRoutes@illinois.gov.

IHDA “Opening Doors” Homebuyer Assistance Program

Governor JB Pritzker announced the reopening of a homeownership program designed to help working-class families and underrepresented communities of color throughout the state of Illinois. Offered through the Illinois Housing Development Authority (IHDA), the **Opening Doors** or **Abriendo Puertas** program is designed to aid households who have historically faced steeper barriers in their path toward homeownership with \$6,000 in forgivable assistance for down payment and/or closing costs. This latest round of assistance is funded through \$20 million in Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act and appropriated to IHDA from the Illinois General Assembly. IHDA expects to assist more than 3,000 homebuyers.

Opening Doors is intentionally designed to address specific barriers commonly faced by underserved populations and households of color when applying for a mortgage and buying a home. IHDA will provide a 30-year 1st mortgage with a competitive fixed interest rate and \$6,000 in down payment and/or closing cost assistance. The down payment assistance is forgiven on a monthly basis over a five-year forgiveness period, and no monthly payment is due from the borrower. Borrowers must meet all eligibility requirements established for IHDA’s down payment assistance programs, and homebuyer education is required. Opening Doors is available to both first-time and repeat buyers, may be used by buyers in any county in the state, and can be used in conjunction with other down payment assistance programs to increase homebuyer leverage.

In addition to the financial assistance, IHDA supports homebuyer counseling and financial education services to increase the number of low-income renters and households of color that are ready to qualify for a mortgage. The program is also supported by a robust marketing and outreach campaign that engages HUD-approved housing counseling agencies, realtors, mortgage lenders and others who work with historically disinvested communities of color to increase awareness and promote homebuyer education among potential borrowers and industry professionals.

All IHDA mortgage programs offer safe and reliable down payment assistance to both first-time and repeat homebuyers in any county of the state. All mortgage products are subject to income and purchase price limits. Eligibility for each product is based on the borrower's credit profile, household income and the purchase price of the home.

Interested homebuyers can find additional information and a list of participating lenders at www.ihdamortgage.org.

IDES 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.

WorkShare IL Benefits Employers and Employees

Employer Benefits:

- Employers maintain a trained workforce during temporary periods of business downturn.
- Employers avoid turnover costs associated with hiring and training new employees.
- Minimizes significant increases to employers' Unemployment Insurance costs.
- Employers can have multiple plans, allowing the flexibility to tailor plans for the needs of business units with different challenges.

Employee Benefits:

- Employees keep their job and avoid a temporary or permanent layoff.
- Employees receive weekly unemployment benefits to offset the partial loss in earnings.
- Employees continue to receive all fringe benefits under the same terms and conditions.
- Employees are not required to conduct ongoing job searches.

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](#)

IDES Virtual Job Fair

Illinois Department of Employment Security, New York University, and Illinois Department of Corrections would like to invite you to participate in a Virtual Job Fair highlighting your Company and job opportunities to returning citizens to the Southern Illinois Area.

Date and time: Thursday, August 31, 2023 1:00 PM | (UTC-05:00) Central Time (US & Canada)

Join link: <https://illinois.webex.com/illinois/j.php?MTID=m768305eb7ff71faab1ee227780e4d839>

Webinar number: 2630 568 3242

Panelist password: TiMEqMdE963 (84637633 from phones and video systems)

Join by video system Dial [26305683242@illinois.webex.com](https://illinois.webex.com/join/26305683242)

You can also dial 173.243.2.68 and enter your meeting number.

Join by phone +1-312-535-8110 United States Toll (Chicago) +1-415-655-0002 US Toll Access code: 263 056 83242

For more information contact Freddie Buckingham with Illinois Department of Employment Security at freddie.l.buckingham@illinois.gov or by phone (618) 214-0161.

Illinois EPA Electric School Buses

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) Director John J. Kim announced a \$27,023,485 Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) to fund the replacement of existing diesel school buses with new all-electric school buses located and operated in any of the three priority areas outlined in the Beneficiary Mitigation Plan (BMP). Illinois EPA will also fund a portion of new electric charging equipment if charging infrastructure is needed. This opportunity continues the Pritzker Administration's commitment to focus Illinois' remaining Volkswagen (VW) Settlement funding on electric transportation and infrastructure.

Through this funding opportunity, Illinois EPA intends to fund projects in the three priority areas outlined in the VW BMP and specified in the NOFO:

- **Priority Area 1:** Cook, DuPage, Kane, Lake, McHenry, and Will counties, Oswego Township in Kendall County, and Aux Sable and Goose Lake townships in Grundy County.
- **Priority Area 2:** Madison, Monroe, and St. Clair counties.
- **Priority Area 3:** Champaign, DeKalb, LaSalle, McLean, Peoria, Sangamon, and Winnebago counties.

Eligible applicants include school districts that own their buses or commercial school bus providers. Purchased buses must serve a school district within one of the three priority areas. Existing diesel buses must be engine Model Year 2009 and older diesel-powered Class 4 – 8 school buses and must be scrapped within 90 days of the new bus being placed into service.

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 – Volkswagen All-Electric School Buses NOFO **will be accepted through 5:00 PM (CST) on September 5, 2023**. All applicants must pre-qualify through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act [Grantee Portal](#).

Helpful Resources

2023 Manufacturing Month

The Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity is planning for Manufacturing Month this October! We will join industry leaders and partners in the national celebration of Manufacturing Day (October 6) as well as celebrating month-long promoting one of Illinois' largest industry sectors and highlighting manufacturing as a viable career option for future generations. Are you planning an event or aware of any local manufacturing month events that will be held within your area? Please let us know and [Register your event](#) on CreatorsWanted.com

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!

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

Other state and federal funding opportunities can be found [here](#).

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 or CEO.CURE@illinois.gov.

To ask a question about the U.S Treasury Reporting Portal, please contact covidreliefITsupport@treasury.gov

Join DCEO's Team

DCEO Team RED 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 8/21/23

Apprenticeship Program Manager (PSA, OPT 1) - Office of Business Development – Sangamon County

Posting closing 8/24/23

First Stop Manager (PSA, Opt. 1) – Office of Entrepreneurship, Innovation & Technology – Sangamon County

EDGE Program Specialist (Ind. & Comm Deve Rep 1) – Office of Business Development – Sangamon County

Posting closing 8/25/23

Climate and Equitable Jobs Act Manager (PSA Opt. 1)

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

Twitter – twitter.com/IllinoisDCEO

Linked In – linkedin.com/company/IllinoisDCEO