



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Northeast Region Weekly Update May 6, 2025



The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is honored to celebrate Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month throughout May. Learn more about upcoming events and support AAPI-owned businesses in Illinois by checking out the business directories listed on our [website](#).

Illinois Grocery Initiative Equipment Upgrade Round 2

The Illinois Grocery Initiative Equipment Upgrades Program will provide grants for new energy-efficient equipment upgrades for existing independently owned for-profit grocery stores, cooperative grocery stores, or not-for-profit grocery stores. While the Illinois Grocery Initiative is intended to reduce or eliminate the existence of "food deserts" in Illinois and will prioritize stores located in food deserts, the Equipment Upgrades Program is not limited to establishments located in food deserts. These grants are intended, however, to facilitate energy-efficient equipment investment and sustainability for stores located in food deserts, areas that could become food deserts, and other areas that are underserved to a lesser degree. These grants will reimburse costs for the purchase and installation of new energy-efficient equipment. Other costs, including investment in solar generation equipment and remodeling, are ineligible for this program.

DCEO has contracted with Chicago State University (CSU) and Western Illinois University (WIU) to provide technical assistance services for Illinois Grocery Initiative applicants and grantees. Applicants desiring assistance in preparing applications may contact these institutions directly. **Chicago State University Derrick K. Collins Dean, College of Business O (773) 995-3976 M (312) 953-1295 dcolli25@csu.edu**. **Western Illinois University Sean Park Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs 217-248-0079 ms-park@wiu.edu**.

The following expenditures will be eligible for reimbursement under this program, insofar the equipment will result in energy efficiency improvements: heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) equipment; refrigeration units and freezers; and lighting systems.

Cost sharing or Matching is required for this opportunity. Applicants are required to provide 25% of the total project costs, representing a 1:3 match. These matching funds can come from any nonstate sources such as local municipal funds, federal funds, or private investment. Such sources of funds shall be identified and documented in the application. To review the NOFO and application information click [here](#) **Application deadline is December 15, 2025.**

Illinois Works Bid Credit Program

Contractors or subcontractors that employ apprentices that have completed the Illinois Works Pre-Apprenticeship Program on any project (stated or privately funded) are eligible to earn bid credits they can use to make their bids for future state-funded public works projects more competitive. The Illinois Works Bid Credit Program provides bid credits for both hiring and retaining graduates. For general program questions, please contact the Illinois Works Bid Credit Program at CEO.BidCreditProgram@illinois.gov. If you're a state agency seeking information regarding the Bid Credit Program, email Rebecca Bailey, Senior Bid Credit Program Manager at Rebecca.j.bailey@illinois.gov. For additional information, please download the [Bid Credit Program One sheeter](#). To view application information and apply for the Bid Credit Program, please visit the [DCEO website](#).

Interested in joining the Illinois Works Bid Credit Program?

If you are a contractor or subcontractor and are interested in registering for the Bid Credit Program, complete the [Contractor Registration Form](#) today!

**Recordings of past webinars can be found on the Illinois Works [Bid Credit Program Partner Guide](#).*

Office of Accountability

Curious about the grant lifecycle or wanting to learn more about the different facets of grants? Do you have a grant-related question that you would like answered in real time? DCEO is pleased to offer three training options for current and potential grantees. Interested in participating in a training session? Learn more and sign up to register at this [link](#).

Virtual Office Hour Q & A - Tuesdays at 2pm:

Join for a virtual question and answer session via Webex in which potential and current Grantees may attend to ask questions and seek assistance. Technical Support Managers will be online to field questions, demonstrate steps, or provide instructions as needed to assist entities and individuals with the grant process.

Pre-Qualification Training – 1st Wednesday of the month 9AM:

This slide presentation will cover Pre-Qualification requirements. Pre-qualification is required of all grantees with the State of Illinois and must be maintained throughout a grant program. To be in pre-qualified status means that all required registrations have been met and an entity is in good standing and able to conduct business with the State of Illinois. Join DCEO's Technical Support Team as we explain each step in the pre-qualification process and how to get started.

Various topics Training – 3rd Wednesday of the month 9AM:

This slide presentation will discuss important grant-related topics pertaining to grant management. Each month we will discuss a different component, process, or emerging practice that can benefit potential and existing grantees. Register or view recording of past grant trainings at this [link](#).

- **May 21, 2025 – Completing a Budget Application:** This training will introduce the budget application and instructions on how to best complete the budget for application submission.
- **Jun 18, 2025 – Reporting and Supporting Documents:** This training will explain the Periodic Performance Report and Periodic Financial Report, as well as appropriate supporting documents required for submission.
- **July 16, 2025 – Indirect Cost Rates:** This training will introduce potential and current Grantees to the Indirect Cost Rate system, the different types of elections and requirements, and the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders through the review process.
- **August 20, 2025 – Help Desk Overview and Resources:** (CSFA, GATA) This training will provide insight on the resources available to potential and current Grantees as they navigate the Grant process. Learn where to find grant opportunities, how to search the CSFA, and how to contact DCEO for assistance.
- **September 17, 2025 – Writing a Grant Application:** This training will explain how to complete application documents, how to read a Notice of Funding Opportunity, and how to submit the application package for review.
- **October 15, 2025 – Capital Grants:** This training will explain what a capital grant is, requirements and eligibility for capital grants, application documents, and an overview of the grant lifecycle.
- **November 19, 2025 – Notice of Funding Opportunities: (NOFOs)** This training will explain what a Notice of Funding Opportunity is and give a breakdown of the template and where to find information.
- **December 17, 2025 – Audits:** This training will introduce grantees to the different Audit types, requirements, and the importance of record retention.

Need assistance with a grant-related question? Please email inquiries to ceo.GrantHelp@illinois.gov or use this [Help Desk Inquiry Form](#). All inquiries submitted outside of business hours will be addressed the following business day.

For a complete list of current DCEO grant opportunities, upcoming grant trainings, video resource library and Grant Help Desk assistance, visit [DCEO Grants \(illinois.gov\)](https://illinois.gov/dceo/grants)

Grant opportunities include:

Illinois Digital Equity Capacity Grant Program (IDEC) – Click [here](#) **Deadline May 8, 2025**

Clean Energy Career Pathway Program – Click [here](#) **Deadline June 30, 2025**

SBIR/STTR Match Program - Click [here](#) **Deadline June 30, 2025**

Future Energy Job Act Multi-Cultural Grant Program – click [here](#) **Deadline July 1, 2025**

Solar Pipeline Training Program – Click [here](#) **Deadline July 1, 2025**

Illinois Grocery Initiative Equipment Upgrade Program Round 2 – Click [here](#) **Deadline December 15, 2025**

Federal Grant Support Program - Click [here](#) **No specific due date but must submit at least 3 weeks ahead of federal application**

Other Federal and State Agency Grants & Programs

Illinois Climate Bank Energy Efficiency Programs

The Illinois Finance Authority, in its role as Illinois' Climate Bank, is pleased to announce the release of **three new grant opportunities** for counties and municipalities:

SOLARAPP+ ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS – APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 11, 2025

The Illinois Climate Bank will offer grants to support units of government that would like to adopt SolarApp+ residential solar permitting software. The program will give up to 10 grants of up to \$30,000 each to Illinois municipalities to fund staff time and expenses necessary to implement SolarApp+. The grants may also be used to update residential electrical codes, where that effort is necessary to adopt and implement SolarApp+. SolarApp+ is a no-cost permitting software developed by National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) to streamline permitting processes for standardized solar systems. SolarApp+ automates rooftop solar plan reviews and produces instant compliance approvals for municipal governments. The software addresses plan and building code compliance and does not address utility interconnection reviews.

Notice of Funding Opportunity: [SolarApp+ NOFO Application Link](#) **Guide:** [How to Apply](#)

RESIDENTIAL SOLAR OUTREACH GRANTS – APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 19, 2025

The Illinois Climate Bank will offer competitive grants to municipalities and nonprofits to: (1) provide intensive outreach and assistance to residents with low incomes applying for the [Illinois Solar for All's \(ILSFA\) Residential Solar \(Small\) program](#), and (2) provide shared services to outreach and assistance grantees. The Illinois Solar for All Residential Solar (ILSFA) program provides no-cost solar system installations to income-qualified residents in 1–4-unit homes. Up to \$500,000 per awardee is available, with a total of \$2.6 million available in the first round.

The grants will fund two types of services. First, grants will be available for intensive customer outreach and support services to increase participation in the ILSFA Residential Solar (Small) program. This program provides income qualified residents with access to affordable on-site solar panels at no or low up-front costs, providing guaranteed savings on electric bills. These customer assistance services will reach beyond mere awareness and will provide personalized assistance to interested and participating residents at every step of the program's process. Second, the program will offer funding for shared services to support organizations providing intensive customer outreach and support services. Municipalities and nonprofits with experience in solar-related outreach, home repair, and other housing-related programs are encouraged to apply.

Notice of Funding Opportunity: [Residential Solar Outreach NOFO Application Link](#) **Guide:** [How to Apply](#)

STRETCH CODE ADOPTION GRANTS – APPLICATIONS DUE MAY 23, 2025

The Illinois Climate Bank is launching a competitive grant opportunity to support local governments in adopting and implementing the 2023 Illinois Stretch Energy Code. Up to \$200,000 per municipality is available, with a total of \$3.6 million in funding anticipated for the first round. Eligible applicants include units of local government in Illinois. Grants can support communities pursuing either full adoption of the Illinois Stretch Energy Code or a phased approach to updating base codes that lay the groundwork for future adoption. Funding may be used for staff training, community engagement, technical assistance, internal planning, permitting process updates, and tracking emissions impacts.

Notice of Funding Opportunity: [Stretch Code Adoption NOFO Application Link](#) Guide: [How to Apply](#)

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR MUNICIPALITIES

Commercial Property Assessed Clean Energy (C-PACE) Financing

- Illinois Climate Bank C-PACE financing can be used by owners and developers to finance eligible improvements to properties, in each case up to 25% of the value of the property.
- Eligible improvements generally include those intended for energy efficiency, renewable energy, resiliency, or water use; electric vehicle charging stations are eligible improvements too.
- Any interested county or municipality that desires to create a PACE area can establish the IFA PACE Program by adopting the enabling PACE Ordinance. [More information on C-PACE can be found here.](#)

IDOT Special Programs Assistance Conference Schedule Announced

[Full list of locations and Registration](#)

The Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) Special Programs Unit will be holding informational conferences in each IDOT district this spring to present three grant programs that could help fund your next transportation project – [Economic Development Program \(EDP\)](#), [Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program \(ITEP\)](#), and [Safe Routes to School Program \(SRTS\)](#). They will be available for two days in each IDOT District area to offer general information about each program and answer your specific questions one-on-one to help you take advantage of funding available from these programs.

On the morning of Day 1, you will be presented general information about each of the programs. Highlights of the information to be provided will include Eligible Sponsors and Projects, Eligible/Ineligible Costs, Funding and Matches, Grant Requirements/Restrictions, New Program Changes, Contracts/Agreements, GATA requirements as applicable, Sunsets/Time Extensions, Scope/Funding Changes, Scoring and Awards. This information will be presented by IDOT staff from the Special Programs Unit and the Bureau of Local Roads and Streets, as well as IDOT district personnel. The morning sessions will be from 9:00am to 12:00pm. There will be time for general questions. Please register in advance so we are prepared for the appropriate numbers of attendees.

On the afternoon of Day 1 and all of Day 2, IDOT staff will be available by appointment to discuss your specific projects and applications one-on-one. Again, we need to stress the competitiveness of these programs. Meeting with us does not guarantee funding. But we may be able to help you strengthen your submissions. Appointments will be held in 30- minute slots from 1:15pm to 5:00pm. Please bring any materials related to your project and/or application. Also, please reserve the earliest slot available when you sign up.

Illinois EPA Unsewered Communities Planning Grants

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acting Director James Jennings announced a new funding opportunity to assist communities where there are currently no wastewater collection and/or treatment facilities. Illinois EPA is making \$1 million available for grants through the Unsewered Communities Planning Grant Program, which will assist small and disadvantaged communities in developing a project plan that identifies a solution to wastewater collection and treatment needs. A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has been posted to the [Illinois EPA website](#).

The Unsewered Communities Planning Grant Program (UCPGP) provides grant funding to develop a plan that will address problems associated with the collection and treatment of wastewater in an unsewered community. Ultimately, this information can be used in an application for a project that would be funded by the Illinois Unsewered Communities Construction Grant Program. Funding for the UCPGP is made possible by utilizing a portion of Illinois EPA's Water Pollution Control Loan Program Loan Support funds generated from loan repayments. Applicants that qualify can receive funding up to \$30,000, and Illinois EPA expects to fund up to 50 grants.

All required forms and information are available on the [Illinois EPA's UCPGP webpage](#). **The application period will remain open until all funding has been expended.** Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness and awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. Applicants must be pre-qualified through the [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act \(GATA\) Grantee Portal](#).

Illinois EPA Lead Service Line Inventory Grant

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced \$6.57 million to assist communities across the state in meeting the inventory requirements of the Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act (LSLRNA). More information can be found at this [link](#). Please note this grant program is for lead service line inventorying purposes only, and lead service line replacement costs are ineligible for this grant program.

IEPA Announces Expanded Eligibility for Energy Efficiency Grants

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acting Director James Jennings announced the expansion of two energy efficiency grant opportunities. The Energy Efficiency Assessment Program and the Energy Efficiency Trust Fund Program provide funding for energy efficiency assessments and upgrade projects at eligible properties serving residents receiving housing assistance. These grant programs will now accept applications statewide for single-family residential and multifamily properties with up to 20 dwelling units serving residents receiving housing assistance.

The Energy Efficiency Assessment Program and the Energy Efficiency Trust Fund Grant Program give organizations the tools to identify renovations that will improve both energy efficiency and comfort of the buildings and then fund those projects. Eligible applicants include public housing authorities, units of local governments, or nonprofit organizations throughout Illinois that serve residents using housing assistance programs. **Both programs will make awards on a first-come, first-serve basis and will remain open until funds are depleted.** For eligibility and application information, visit:

- [Energy Efficiency Assessment Program](#) Send EE Assessment Program questions to Rebecca Luke, Office of Energy - Energy Projects Coordinator at Rebecca.J.Luke@Illinois.gov.
- [Energy Efficiency Trust Fund Grant Program](#)

Still have questions? Review the FAQ Document [Link](#) OR send EE Trust Fund Grant Program questions to Rebecca Luke at Rebecca.J.Luke@Illinois.gov. For more information about these grant programs and other Office of Energy efforts to increase energy efficiency and resiliency please click this [link](#).

Helpful Resources

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>
 - Video Training & Resources Library [Video Training & Resources \(illinois.gov\)](#)

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>

State of Illinois Commission on Equity & Inclusion

The Commission on Equity and Inclusion (CEI) was created to expand access to state contracts for minorities, women, persons with disabilities, and veterans and assist the state in enhancing the equity and inclusion throughout its workforce. CEI's reach into state hiring and contracting is expansive and encompasses the involvement of several state agencies and commissions.

The Business Enterprise Program (BEP) for businesses owned by minorities, women, and persons with disabilities is committed to fostering an inclusive, equitable and competitive business environment that will support underrepresented businesses increase their capacity, grow revenue, and enhance credentials.

Business Enterprise Program (BEP) Certification [BEP Certification](#)

The Veterans Business Program (VBP) assists businesses owned by qualified service-disabled and veteran-owned businesses in gaining access to State of Illinois contracting opportunities and participating in the competitive procurement process.

Veterans Business Program (VBP) [VBP Certification](#)

Workforce Development – Office of Employment & Training

The Office of Employment and Training supports innovative workforce programs and career, training and employment services that connect employers to a highly skilled workforce. Providing assistance and resources for job seekers is central to Illinois' commitment to ensuring that businesses thrive in our state.

Programs and services:

- [Illinois workNet®](#)
- [WIOA Works Illinois](#)
- [Apprenticeship Illinois](#)
- [Trade Adjustment Assistance Program \(TAA\)](#)
- [WIOA Success Stories](#)
- [More Programs and Resources](#)
- [Illinois Workforce Development System \(IWDS\)](#)
- [Climate and Equitable Jobs Act](#)

DCEO Business Information Center (BIC)

The BIC (First Stop) serves as a comprehensive resource for entrepreneurs and small businesses. Our services include assistance with licensing and permitting, resource referrals, small business environmental assistance, and regulatory alerts for small businesses.

[License & Permit Assistance and Resource Referrals](#)

Contact us at BIC@Illinois.gov or 800-252-2923

Explore: [Self-Serve Knowledge Base](#)

[Regulatory Flexibility Program](#)

Contact us at ceo.regflex@illinois.gov or 217-299-1263

View our weekly [Illinois Regulatory Alert](#)

[Small Business Environmental Assistance](#)

Contact us at dceo.sbeap@illinois.gov or 800-252-3998

Explore: [Frequently Asked Questions](#)

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!

Join DCEO's Team

DCEO's Team is expanding around the state, including on Team RED. To apply for these jobs, please go to the Work4Illinois [website](#) and use the search function to find the positions for DCEO.

UDIT AND RESOLUTIONS MANAGER – Springfield

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SPECIAL POPULATIONS PROGRAM MANAGER – Chicago

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: [@illinoisdceo](#)

LinkedIn: [Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity](#)