



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

Southwest Region Weekly Update November 15, 2024

Tourism Attractions Grant and Tourism Private Sector Grant

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced \$2.3 million in tourism funding through two grant programs, the Tourism Attractions Grant Program (\$1.7 million) and the Tourism Private Sector Grant Program (\$600,000). Eligible entities can apply for grants to develop and improve new and existing tourism attractions through the Tourism Attractions Grant Program as well as grants to support and attract events and festivals through the Tourism Private Sector Grant Program in an effort to boost tourism across the state and welcome more visitors. Grantees will be selected through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) process.

The \$1.7 million Tourism Attractions Grant Program will provide funding for the development or improvement of tourism attractions in Illinois, such as museums, recreation areas, amusement parks, and more. The goal of the program is to provide assistance for projects that increase the economic impact of tourism throughout Illinois by increasing visitation rates, boosting hotel occupancy, increasing local hotel and sales tax revenue, and more.

Additionally, DCEO is allocating \$600,000 through the Tourism Private Sector Grant Program which provides funding to entities to attract, host and develop new or enhanced events and festivals across Illinois. The grant opportunity is open to non-profits, government entities, for-profit institutions, and local promotional groups and as defined in state statute, matching funds must be provided by private sector entities, which is the origin of the program's name. Grant funds can be used for a variety of purposes that support new, expanded, or enhanced events and festivals including advertising and marketing, transportation, building or equipment rental, receptions and banquets, registration, entertainment, and more.

Eligible applicants for both tourism grants include counties, municipalities, not-for-profit organizations, local promotion groups, and for-profit entities, and Tourism Attraction grants are also open to units of local government.

For the Tourism Attraction program, qualified entities can apply for grants between \$15,000 to \$200,000, with a 1:1 match required. **Applications will be accepted until December 20, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.** To view the NOFO and apply for the grant, please visit the [DCEO website](#). **To help applicants prepare to apply for funding, DCEO will be holding a webinar focused on the Tourism Attraction Grant Program at 9 a.m. on Tuesday, November 26.**

Eligible entities can apply for Tourism Private Sector grants between \$10,000 to \$50,000, with a 1:1 match requirement. **Applications will be accepted until December 20, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.** To view the NOFO and apply for the grant, please visit the [DCEO website](#). **To help applicants prepare to apply for funding, DCEO will be holding a webinar focused on the Tourism Private Sector Grant Program at 11 a.m. on Tuesday, November 26.** Interested parties are also encouraged to reach out to CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov for application assistance.



The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is proud to celebrate Native American Heritage Month, in partnership with the Native American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois. This year's celebration entails hosting an event uplifting Native American women, amplifying Native American business leaders, organizations, and business enterprises throughout the state, and celebrating the Native American community here in Illinois.

Voices of Strength: Inspirational Leadership Among Native American Women

Wednesday | November 20, 2024 | 12:00 pm – 1:00 pm | in-person | [RSVP Required](#)

555 W Monroe St, Chicago, IL 60661 (Illinois Room)

In celebration of Native American Heritage Month, "Voices of Strength" brings together a panel of distinguished Native American women leaders to discuss their powerful journeys of leadership, fortitude, and community impact. This event will highlight personal stories, challenges, and triumphs of Native American women who have become trailblazers in their respective fields, driving change and inspiring future generations. The panelists will share their experiences in harmonizing cultural identity with modern leadership roles and how they continue to uplift their communities through advocacy, education, and social change. Attendees will leave with a deeper understanding of the rich contributions Native American women make to society and how their voices shape the future. The event is free to attend but registration is **Required**. Please RSVP <https://bit.ly/3C2xE3H>.

The event is hosted by the Native American Chamber of Commerce of Illinois, Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS), and the Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO).

Team RED Monthly Webinar: EDGE and REV 101

Thursday, November 21 at 10:00am

Join Team RED and our DCEO colleagues for November's monthly webinar as we review the basics of our most popular business attraction, expansion and retention programs REV and EDGE. Also learn about additional program announcements, events, updates and more!

Registration link: <https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/r58fde158049f3735460ed081e8432df4>

State-Designated Cultural Districts Designations

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced open applications for State-Designated Cultural Districts in Illinois. State-Designated Cultural Districts are communities, towns, or specific geographic areas that have a distinct shared historical and cultural identity that binds the community together. Once selected, the State plans to make \$3 million available to State-Designated Cultural Districts, and through the designations, aims to uplift the unique contributions of historic cultural districts with the goal of increasing economic development opportunities.

The goal of the State-Designated Cultural Districts program is to encourage economic development; support the preservation and development of history and culturally significant structures, traditions, and languages; foster local cultural development and education; provide a focal point for celebrating communities' unique cultural identities; and promote equitable growth and opportunity without generating displacement.

State-Designated Cultural Districts are intended to empower communities and geographic areas to collaborate on applications based on the shared characteristics and experiences that bind them together, such as ethnic identity or shared history. There are no population or geographic limitations on what defines a Cultural District, and it could take many forms, for example, a main street business corridor, an entire rural town, or a historic geographic cluster in a larger city.

Recipients will be eligible to apply for \$3 million in funding that will be tailored to fit the needs of individual Cultural Districts and support the goals of the program to foster economic development and help communities preserve their unique cultural identities.

The State-Designated Cultural Districts opportunity is open to localities, municipalities and community-based non-profit organizations through a competitive Notice of Designation Opportunity (NODO). To be selected, applicants must demonstrate the ways in which they have a distinct cultural identity and have historically faced challenges preserving their unique cultural attributes due to gentrification, displacement or the COVID-19 pandemic. Applications will be evaluated based on the needs of the community, capacity to serve as a Cultural District, and quality of the application submitted, with a focus on ensuring geographic diversity for statewide representation.

To view the competitive Notice of Designation Opportunity (NODO) and apply for the NODO, please visit the [DCEO website](#). **Applicants are due by December 16, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.**

Illinois Grocery Initiative – New Stores in Food Deserts Round 2 Grant

Round 2 of New Stores in Food Deserts Program will offer competitive grants to improve access to fresh food within food deserts by providing funding to establish grocery stores. The Illinois Grocery Initiative New Stores in Food Deserts program, authorized by Public Act 103-0561, is intended to address the challenge of food deserts. Food deserts are census tracts meeting specific criteria related to poverty standards, population density, and limited fresh food accessibility. This program aims to combat food insecurity by offering competitive grants to support the establishment of new grocery stores in these areas by reimbursing successful applicants for eligible capital and non-capital costs. In Round 2 of this program, \$11 million is available to fund these grants.

Awards can range between \$150K to \$2.4M, with a 1:3 match requirement from businesses. Requirements for grocery locations include:

- Must be or will be best classified as a supermarket or other grocery retailer in the 2022 North American Industry Classification System under code 445110, a meat retailer under code 44524, a fruit and vegetable retailer under code 44523, or a fish and seafood retailer under 44525.
- Must be located in a food desert census tract (as defined in the NOFO),
- Must earn less than 30% of revenue from alcohol and tobacco sales,
- Must accept SNAP and WIC, and
- Must contribute to diversity of fresh foods available in community.

Qualified entities include units of local government and independent grocers or cooperatives with fewer than 500 employees and no more than four grocery locations. New Stores in Food Deserts grants will fund construction and renovation costs for new stores, as well as many first-year operations costs, such as employee wages, utility costs, initial inventory of food, and more.

DCEO has contracted with Western Illinois University (WIU) and Chicago State University (CSU) to provide technical assistance services for Illinois Grocery Initiative applicants and grantees. Applicants desiring assistance in preparing applications may contact these institutions directly. Their contact information is listed in the NOFO

To view the competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) and apply for the grant, please visit the DCEO website [here](#). **Application deadline December 2, 2024.**

Low Income Energy Home Assistance Program (LIHEAP)

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) released information about this year's Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) to support income eligible households with utility costs. **LIHEAP will begin accepting applications on October 1, 2024, through August 15, 2025, or until funds are exhausted.**

All income eligible households are now eligible to apply. They can apply by visiting helpillinoisfamilies.com or by visiting their local agency (a list of partners throughout the state can be found [here](#)). Families can also call 1-833-711-0374 for assistance in 30 languages.

LIHEAP provides one-time payments directly to energy service providers on behalf of recipients. While the amount of support varies based on the needs of individual families, last year over 333,000 households received LIHEAP, with an average of over \$724 per household. All families who meet the qualifications and provide proper documentation will receive support until funding is exhausted. Families who earn up to two times the federal poverty level are eligible to receive support through LIHEAP. A chart with eligible income thresholds can be found on the [webpage](#).

CEJA Updates

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is pleased to announce the release of three Notices of Funding Opportunities for the following programs:

- [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. Robust barrier reduction funding is available for participants 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.

At this time, the Department is accepting applications from Carbondale, Danville, and Peoria.

[APPLICATION LINK](#). **Applications are due December 2, 2024.**

- [The Energy Transition Navigator Program](#) will provide grants to community-based providers to serve as Energy Transition Navigator Teams to recruit eligible individuals to participate in the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and the Illinois Climate Works Pre-apprenticeship Program. At this time, the Department is accepting applications from Champaign. [APPLICATION LINK](#). **Applications are due December 2, 2024.**
- [The Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program](#) will provide grants to organizations to train people who are incarcerated in the Illinois Department of Corrections facilities. Participants will receive essential employability skills training as part of vocational or occupational training. The training will lead to certifications or credentials that prepare candidates for employment. The Returning Resident Program will use a standard Clean Jobs Curriculum for Returning Residents. At this time, the Department is accepting applications from organizations proposing to serve the following correctional facilities: Western Illinois Correctional Center and Vienna Correctional center. [APPLICATION LINK](#). **Applications are due November 26, 2024.**

Take advantage of opportunities to receive one-on-one technical assistance and resources to learn more about the program.

- [Sign up for a one-on-one technical assistance session](#) with a CEJA program coach.
- Review the August 28th NOFO Outreach Session for the Clean Jobs Workforce Network Program and ET Navigator Program [HERE](#)
- Review the September 25th NOFO Outreach Session for the Returning Residents Clean Jobs Training Program [HERE](#)
- Check the [FAQ for Applicants](#), where you can find the answers to questions that have come up in the past
- Submit questions about the program and the application process via e-mail to ceo.ceja@illinois.gov.

If you haven't already, please sign up for our mailing list [HERE](#), so you can receive updates in your email as they are announced.

Finally, stay tuned to the [DCEO CEJA Updates and Program Status page](#) for additional announcements and program information.

Apprenticeship Illinois 2024 Employer Events

LUNCH AND LEARN WEBINARS

The Apprenticeship Expansion webinar series includes presentations from workforce partners from different state agencies and apprenticeship stakeholders to highlight best practices for collaboration on the development of registered apprenticeship programs. In combining these guest webinars with a core curriculum that emphasizes expediency, equity, creativity, and thoughtful partnership for apprenticeship outreach and registration, the Apprenticeship Illinois team aims to cultivate a cohort of apprenticeship professionals.

Date	Webinar Topic
December 10, 2024	Yearly Health Check-Up: Reflections and Advice from Illinois Healthcare Apprenticeships

National Apprenticeship Week (NAW) is a nationwide celebration that brings together business and labor leaders, career seekers, educational institutions, and critical partners to demonstrate their support for apprenticeships. Apprenticeship Illinois will celebrate **Apprenticeship Week 2024 this November 17-23rd** by hosting a range of in-person and virtual events and amplifying local and regional celebrations of apprenticeships. This week allows apprenticeship sponsors across the state to showcase programs, facilities, and apprentices in their community. It provides employers and future apprentices who are curious about apprenticeships with a way to learn about the benefits that come from learning and earning. The National Apprenticeship Week events will be posted on the apprenticeship Illinois website. Please let us know of any events in your area and promote NAW within your network. www.ApprenticeshipIllinois.com. If you have any questions or ideas, please feel free to contact Jennifer Foil at jfoil@niu.edu.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced \$26.5 million in funding for the Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG) for Public Infrastructure and Housing Rehabilitation. Grantees will be selected through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) process.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Public Infrastructure

Public infrastructure grants are designed to provide communities with funding to improve public infrastructure, public health and quality of life. These projects include construction of storm sewer pipes, waterline replacements, and water storage tank construction, and other critical projects that help mitigate flooding and support sewage management, water delivery and other public water necessities.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) for Housing Rehabilitation

Housing rehabilitation grants are designed to assist low-to-moderate income homeowners with improvements to ensure safe and sanitary living conditions. Eligible uses of funds include structural work, lead remediation, electrical, plumbing, new appliances, flooring, ADA, and accessibility accommodations, and more.

An additional \$1.9 million is available for Economic Development projects funded by the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) on an as-needed basis. This grant funding opportunity includes up to \$1 million for economic development projects. This includes construction, reconstruction, and installation or rehabilitation of commercial or industrial buildings, structures and other real property.

Eligible applicants can apply for Public Infrastructure grants from \$300,000 to \$1 million and Housing Rehabilitation grants from \$300,000 to \$650,000. **Applications for both grants will be accepted until December 4, 2024, at 5 p.m. Applications for economic development funding will be accepted on a rolling basis.** Applicants can view the Public Infrastructure and Housing and apply for the grants, on the DCEO [website](#).

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!

Learn more about the Bid Credit Program at an upcoming information webinar.

**Recordings of our 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? Sign up [here](#)

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. Future topics offerings include:

- **11/20/24 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.
- **12/18/24 Audit Submissions:** This training will introduce grantees to the different Audit types, requirements, and the importance of record retention.

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

Grant opportunities include:

Illinois Energy Transition Navigators Program – Click [here](#) **Deadline December 2, 2024**

Illinois Clean Energy Jobs Workforce Network – Click [here](#) **Deadline December 2, 2024**

Illinois Grocery Initiative New Stores in Food Deserts – Click [here](#) **Deadline December 2, 2024**

CDBG Public Infrastructure – Click [here](#) **Deadline December 4, 2024**
CDBG Housing Rehabilitation – Click [here](#) **Deadline December 4, 2024**
Tourism Private Sector – Click [here](#) **Deadline December 20, 2024**
Tourism Attraction – Click [here](#) **Deadline December 20, 2024**
Quality Jobs Program - Click [here](#) **Deadline December 31, 2024**
Equitable Energy Future Grant Program – Click [here](#) **Deadline December 31, 2024**
SBIR/STTR Match Program - Click [here](#) **Deadline June 30, 2025**
Illinois Returning Residents Clean Jobs (CEJA) - Click [here](#) **Deadline Rolling**
Federal Grant Support Program - Click [here](#) **No specific due date but must submit at least 3 weeks ahead of federal application**
CDBG Economic Development Program - Click [here](#) **Deadline Rolling**

Other Federal and State Agency Grants & Programs

IEPA Residential Sharps Collection Program

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) Acting Director James Jennings announced an additional \$400,000 in funding available to units of local government to conduct collection and disposal of household sharps for their residents. Sharps, including needles, syringes, and lancets, collected from private citizens are a household waste. Through the grant program, Illinois EPA provides funding for grantees to operate a sharps collection station, as defined in Section 3.458 of the [Illinois Environmental Protection Act](#), and disposal of the collected sharps as Potentially Infectious Medical Waste (PIMW) rather than comingled with other household items.

Grant funding of up to \$35,000 per applicant is available to cover expenses incurred in collecting, storing, and disposing of used sharps. Eligible expenses include costs to obtain collection containers for use by individual residents, collection receptacles to store sharps at the sharps collection station, mobilization fees assessed by a permitted PIMW transporter to pick-up collected sharps, and disposal fees for the collected sharps. All required forms and information can be found at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/waste-management/waste-disposal/medication-disposal/sharps/residential-sharps-collection-program.html>.

Applications for the Residential Sharps Collection Program will be accepted until funding is expended or June 30, 2025. Applicants must be pre-qualified through the [Grant Accountability and Transparency Act \(GATA\) Grantee Portal](#).

Urban Area & Statewide Non-Profit Security Grant Program

The Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS) was notified by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on October 28, 2024, of two grant opportunities for non-profit organizations across Illinois. Available funding for these two grant opportunities for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Nonprofit Security Grant Program National Security Supplemental (NSGP-NSS) is \$210 million nationally.

The **FY 2024 Urban Area Nonprofit Security Grant Program National Security Supplemental (NSGP-NSS-UASI)** will provide a total of \$105 million nationally to eligible 501(c) (3) organizations who are deemed at high-risk of a potential terrorist attack and are located in one of the FY 2024 UASI-eligible urban areas. The designated urban area for Illinois is Cook County.

The **FY 2024 Statewide Nonprofit Security Grant Program National Security Supplemental (NSGP-NSS-S)** will provide a total of \$105 million nationally to eligible 501(c)(3) organizations who are deemed at high-risk of a potential terrorist attack located outside of Cook County.

IEMA-OHS, as the State Administrative Agency, will issue these competitive grants, up to \$200,000, to applicants that are approved by the Grants Program Directorate/FEMA. Eligible non-profit organizations with one site may apply for up to \$200,000 for that site. Eligible non-profit organizations with multiple sites may apply for up to \$200,000 per site, for up to three sites, for a maximum of \$600,000 per sub-applicant, per funding stream. The period of performance is 36 months.

Both NSGP-Urban Area and NSGP-National Security Program funds must be used for security enhancements activities, which can be accomplished through the purchase or installation of security equipment on real property (including buildings and improvements) owned or leased by the non-profit organization, as well as through contracted security personnel. Security enhancements must be for the location(s) that the nonprofit occupies at the time of the application, and the projects must be fully completed during the three-year performance period.

Complete applications from eligible nonprofit organizations must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m. CDT on Wednesday, December 18, 2024.

To learn more about this funding opportunity, eligible applicants should visit the IEMA-OHS website: https://iemaohs.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/iemaohs/hs/documents/grants/uasi-nsgp/uasi-nsgpnofo_uasi_nsgp.pdf and download the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO). For questions on the application process, email EMA.ITTF.grants@illinois.gov. Additional information about these grant programs are located on the FEMA website: <https://www.fema.gov/grants/preparedness/nonprofit-security>. Illinois Emergency Management Agency and Office of Homeland Security (IEMA-OHS): Ready.Illinois.gov

Illinois EPA EV Rebate Program

The Illinois EPA will open the next EV Rebate Program funding round on **January 21, 2025**. The funding round will run **from January 21, 2025, to April 30, 2025**. Illinois residents purchasing a new or used all-electric passenger vehicle (\$4,000) or all-electric motorcycle (\$1,500) from an Illinois licensed dealer are eligible for the rebate. Applicants that certify as low income are given priority in disbursement of the rebates.

EV rebates are subject to the availability of funds for each cycle. The Illinois General Assembly has appropriated \$14 million to Illinois EPA for the current fiscal year, which ends on June 30, 2025. Actual funding amounts will be determined by the amount of money available in the Electric Vehicle Rebate Fund, not to exceed \$14 million. The Illinois EPA is announcing the funding round now to allow Illinois residents time to plan vehicle purchases.

Applicants must apply during the rebate cycle window and within 90 days of purchase of the vehicle. The application and instructions will be available shortly before the opening of the rebate cycle on the Illinois EPA's [Electric Vehicle Rebate Program](#) webpage.

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.

Applicants will need to submit the following along with the information contained in the rebate application:

- Copy of the bill of sale, purchase invoice, or purchase agreement from an Illinois dealership;
- Documentation of proof of purchase, such as a copy of a canceled check, an invoice or bill showing that the applicable amount has been paid or that no remaining balance exists, or loan documents
- Copy of the Illinois vehicle registration or temporary permit provided by the dealership at the time of sale/delivery; and
- IRS W-9 or W-8 form

Illinois Arts Council Creative Accelerator Fund Guidelines and Application

The Illinois Arts Council (IAC) is pleased to announce the release of the [Creative Accelerator Fund](#) (CAF). As part of IAC's [Bold New Changes](#), the Creative Accelerator Fund provides crucial support to artists with a goal of strengthening the creative workforce that composes a significant portion of Illinois' economic activity. CAF recognizes and supports the vital role that artists play as builders and innovators in their communities. By investing in their practice and professional growth, the fund not only enriches the lives of artists but also encourages broader community engagement and investment leading to a vibrant cultural landscape and fostering connections among residents.

The Creative Accelerator Fund (CAF) will provide 130 artists with a flexible \$10,000 taxable award. IAC anticipates a large response to this application and will determine recipients by randomized selection. Each [IAC region](#) has its own allocation, and recipients will be selected from the applications submitted in that region. **The deadline to apply is Wednesday, November 20, 2024.**

To be eligible, individual artists must demonstrate an active and sustained practice, be age 21 or older, be established as an Illinois resident and not currently enrolled full-time at a college or university in any undergraduate, graduate, or doctoral program. All applications must be submitted via the applicant's IAC [Salesforce account](#).

IAC staff conducted a Creative Accelerator Fund webinar on October 4. A recorded version of the webinar with transcripts will be made available on the [Creative Accelerator Fund](#) webpage. The IAC will also host three "Drop-In" sessions. Drop-in sessions are one-hour sessions where participants may ask questions of the Program Staff and get answers in real time. Drop-ins do not require pre-registration. Simply click the link at the time of the meeting to join the call via WebEx. Visit the [Creative Accelerator Fund](#) webpage for details. For questions, please contact your [Regional Program Director](#).

Illinois Farm Bureau Rural Development Grant

The 2024-2025 Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) Rural Development Grant Program officially opened on Tuesday, October 1, with **applications being accepted through Wednesday, December 18, 2024**. In conjunction with county Farm Bureaus, IFB will award a total of \$100,000 spread across multiple grants. The purpose of this program is to develop partnerships by providing funding through the county Farm Bureaus for investment in rural development projects being implemented in a community or county that will positively impact Farm Bureau members and other residents. Successful rural development projects will improve the economic well-being and/or quality of life in their community or county. To discuss your project and request a link to the online JotForm application, please contact your county Farm Bureau. For more information, including FAQs, please visit ilfb.org/rdgrants . **Grant recipients will be notified by January 31, 2025.**

Illinois EPA Driving a Cleaner Illinois – VW Round 7 – Transit Buses

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) Acting Director James Jennings announced a \$27 million Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for the replacement of existing public transit buses with new all-electric transit options. Grant awards will cover 75% of the eligible cost per electric transit bus and any necessary charging infrastructure, with a minimum award amount of \$300,000. Eligible applicants include government and transit agencies that own and operate public transit buses in any of the three priority areas outlined in the Volkswagen Beneficiary Mitigation Plan (BMP) and further described below. This funding opportunity will remain open until funding is depleted with grants awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis.

As outlined in Illinois' BMP for the Volkswagen diesel emissions settlement, and as specified in the NOFO, Illinois EPA will fund projects in the following priority areas:

- **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.**

Government/transit agencies that own and operate public transit buses in one of the three priority areas are eligible to apply. Purchased buses must serve within one of the three priority areas. Existing diesel buses to be replaced (scrapped), must meet the following criteria:

- Currently operating in the transit fleet
- Engine Model Year 2009 and older diesel-powered Class 4 – 8 transit buses; and
- Must be scrapped within 90 days of the new buses being placed into service.

Illinois EPA's BMP focuses the State's VW allocation on electric transportation and infrastructure. The goals of the plan include reducing nitrogen oxide emissions in areas where the affected VW vehicles were registered. The BMP also takes into consideration areas that do not meet federal air quality standards for ozone and bear a disproportionate share of the air pollution burden, including environmental justice areas.

The link to the Notice of Funding Opportunity can be found on the Driving A Cleaner Illinois webpage:

<https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/air-quality/driving-a-cleaner-illinois.html>. **Applications must be received by 5:00 PM CT on November 25, 2024.**

Illinois EPA 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 <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/energy/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-assessment-program.html> 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 <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/energy/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-trust-fund-grant.html> **Still have questions?** Review the FAQ Document Link OR send EE Trust Fund Grant Program questions to Rebecca Luke, Office of Energy - Energy Projects Coordinator at Rebecca.J.Luke@Illinois.gov

Before applying to the grant program, applicants must be pre-qualified through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal, <https://gata.illinois.gov/>. For more information about these grant programs and other Office of Energy efforts to increase energy efficiency and resiliency please visit <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/energy.html>

Illinois EPA Green Infrastructure Grant

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency Interim Director James Jennings announced a grant opportunity with \$5 million in funding for projects that will improve water quality in Illinois. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is posted at <https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/45aeb4c5-055a-4441-aeb8-d49eae66772b>.

The GIGO Program seeks proposals for projects containing green infrastructure best management practices (BMPs) that prevent, eliminate, or reduce stormwater runoff, reducing localized or riverine flooding in Illinois' rivers, streams, and lakes. Projects that implement treatment trains (multiple BMPs in series) and/or multiple BMPs within the same watershed are encouraged as they may be more effective and efficient than a single large green infrastructure BMP. BMPs may be located on public or private land.

For the GIGO program, green infrastructure is defined as 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.

Applications for the GIGO Program are due by noon on **November 20, 2024, at 12:00 PM (CST)**. Additional information is available at: <https://epa.illinois.gov/topics/grants-loans/water-financial-assistance/gigo.html>. Applicants must apply for GIGO through the [GATA Grantee Portal](#).

Are You Ready for the Corporate Transparency Act (CTA)?

Presented by the [Office of the Illinois Secretary of State Alexi Giannoulas' Business Services Department](#)

Wednesday, December 4, 2024 | 1:00 PM | virtual | [Register here](#)

Effective January 1, 2024, a new federal law requires many companies doing business in the State of Illinois to report information to the U.S. government about who ultimately owns and controls them. This information is reported to the U.S. Department of the Treasury's Financial Crimes Enforcement Network (FinCEN). Please join the Illinois Secretary of State's office for a discussion of these new beneficial ownership information reporting requirements and what businesses need to do to comply with the law. They will also share resources FinCEN has developed to help businesses understand this new requirement.

For more information contact Kim Aileen at AKim@ILSOS.GOV.

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>

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](#)

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

Do you have questions about ARPA? Check out the Technical Assistance page on our DCEO website. Click [here](#)

August 8, 2024 - offices hours presentation slides Click [here](#)

FAQs: View [frequently asked questions](#) about this program.

Need help? 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 covidrelieftsupport@treasury.gov.

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 at <https://illinois.jobs2web.com/> and use the search function to find the positions for our department.

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