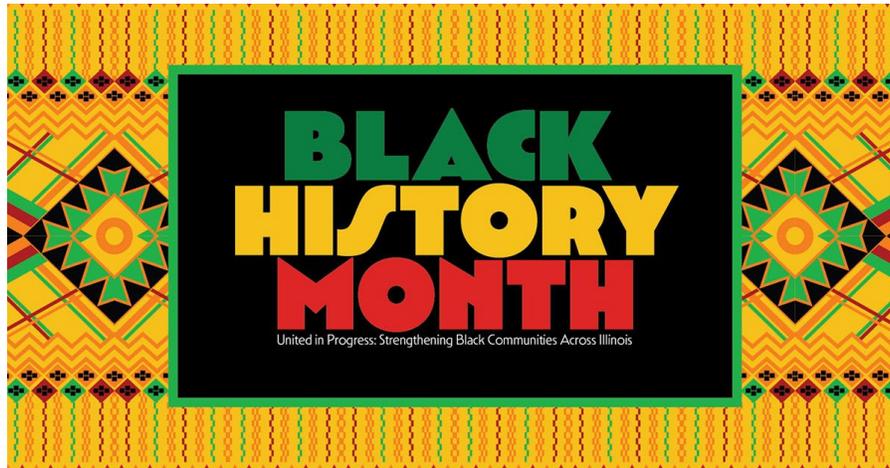




**Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity**

JB Pritzker, Governor

**Southwest Region Weekly Update
January 30, 2026**



The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is proud to celebrate Black History Month. Throughout February, DCEO will be hosting a series of virtual and in-person events to engage with and uplift Black businesses and entrepreneurs across Illinois. Find information about events and resources below.

[Woodson Regional Library Roundtable](#)

Thursday | February 5, 2026 | 10:00 - 11:30 am | in-person
9525 S Halstead St 60628

Dive into the historic Library of the Founder of Black History Month! Discover valuable state resources and explore local opportunities designed to help your business grow and thrive. Speakers includes Obama Foundation Center and the Chicagoland Chamber SBDC.

[Webinar: The 1908 Project with The Springfield Project](#)

Wednesday | February 11, 2026 | 10:00 – 11:00 am | virtual

Learn about how Springfield leaders are maintaining Black History in Springfield and how in 1908, the was an organization was founded to help improve the City of Springfield and specifically the impact of Blacks in Springfield.

[Metro East Realist Collective Black History Business Tour & Roundtable](#)

Thursday | February 26, 2026 | 11:00 am - 2:00 pm | in-person
616 N. 16th St. East, St. Louis, IL, 62205

Join the Metro East area for a workshop uncovering current State resources, learn more about Black History in Metro East and how Black people have built and sustained the Metro East community. Markayle Tolliver, in collaboration with Metro East Realist Collective, will be touring Black-owned small businesses throughout the Metro East area.

Resources

- DCEO Grant Opportunities
 - [Apply for Funding - Grant Opportunities](#)
- Black History Month Celebrations Throughout the State
 - Chicago
 - [How to celebrate Black History Month in Chicago | Choose Chicago](#)
 - [Black Chicago Heritage Initiative | City of Chicago](#)
 - Peoria
 - [Member Directory | Black Business Alliance, Peoria Chapter](#)
 - Quad County
 - [African American Owned | Quad County African American Chamber of Commerce](#)
- Enjoy Illinois – Black Illinois Makers
 - [Celebrate Black History Month in Illinois | Enjoy Illinois](#)

Stay Connected!

Sign up for the [OE3 newsletter](#) to receive more information on resources for minority owned businesses and entrepreneurs.

For more information on Black Heritage Month, contact Markayle Tolliver at Markayle.Tolliver@illinois.gov, or to learn more about ongoing resources and programs for businesses, follow DCEO on social media [@IllinoisDCEO](#).

Introducing the New CEJA Website

DCEO is pleased to announce the launch of its [new Climate and Equitable Jobs Act \(CEJA\) website](#). This updated site is the result of a year-long effort to refine content and tools to better serve the needs of communities across Illinois. It emphasizes clear program information, opportunities for engagement, and improved access to resources, including the CEJA Map.

Key features of the new website include:

- Clearer information organized by audience and stakeholder type
- Updated eligibility requirements for potential program participants
- Updated contact information for CEJA and FEJA grantees
- The CEJA Map and additional supporting resources

We invite you to visit the website to learn more about CEJA and how Illinois is advancing clean energy, workforce development, and equity in communities across the state. If you have questions about or suggestions for future website updates, please contact us at CEO.CEJA@Illinois.gov.

CEJA Capacity Grant

The Workforce Policy Lab, in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), is excited to introduce the CEJA Capacity Grant Program—a bold new initiative to strengthen a more inclusive and resilient clean energy future for Illinois.

Launching in 2026, this program will provide current and prospective DCEO CEJA grantees and sub-grantees with robust capacity-building support, along with grant awards starting at \$100,000. This direct investment will empower 501(c)(3) organizations across the state to scale clean energy workforce development, expand contractor opportunities, and drive equitable economic growth in communities statewide.

Visit the program [website](#) to explore program details and stay informed about opportunities and updates. Share the interest form found on the program website with your network so they can be the first to hear about the CEJA Capacity Grant when the opportunity goes live in February.

STAR Bonds Expanded Statewide

Sales Tax and Revenue (STAR) bonds support economic growth by financing the development and revitalization of major tourism, entertainment, retail, and destination-based projects in STAR bond districts. The Statewide Innovation Development and Economy Act was recently expanded to extend the availability of STAR bonds to support municipalities in every region of the state by empowering them with additional financing options to meaningfully invest in capital projects that will attract visitors and spur additional revenues in local economies.

Governor Pritzker has signed **SB1911 (Public Act 104-0453)**, expanding Illinois' **Sales Tax and Revenue (STAR) Bonds** program so communities across the state can pursue major tourism, entertainment, retail, and other destination projects by leveraging a portion of **future sales tax growth** generated within a defined STAR bond district. ([Public Act 104-0453](#))

What's new and why it matters

- **Expanded local authority:** Counties and municipalities may establish STAR bond districts (including in eligible unincorporated areas).
- **Project scale:** District plans are evaluated against thresholds including **\$30M+ projected capital investment** and **\$60M+ annual gross sales** (with higher thresholds for NOVA districts).
- **State coordination & approvals:** District plans are submitted for joint consideration involving **DCEO, IDOR, and GOMB**, with final approval through the State process. [Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity \(DCEO\)](#)
- **Key deadlines:** Local governments must **notify DCEO and IDOR of intent by June 1, 2026**, and proposed district plans must be submitted **by January 1, 2027**.

To learn more or signal interest: Email ceo.starbonds@illinois.gov and visit: <https://dceo.illinois.gov/star-bonds>.

Manufacturing Training Academies Funding Opportunity

Governor JB Pritzker and DCEO announced \$24 million is now available in grant funding to establish six new Manufacturing Training Academies (MTAs) at community colleges in the state's downstate regions to expand training for high-demand manufacturing jobs in Illinois. Grantees will be selected through a competitive Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) process.

Eligible applicants include community colleges outside of Cook and the collar counties, excluding previous MTA awardees. Through this competitive NOFO, qualified entities can apply for grants from \$3 million to \$6 million. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until April 30, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. or until funds are exhausted. 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.

DCEO "Online with OE3" Monthly Webinar Series

Join OE3's Business Development Managers online and get the latest updates on financial resources from the state, federal, and local government programs, and other funding opportunities from private/community organizations, as well as the opportunity to ask us any questions about your business in English and Spanish! We have different topics on the first Wednesday of each month from 10-11 a.m.

The topic for **Wednesday, February 4**, is Business Registration and Tax Credit Overview. The speaker will be Craig Anderson of the Illinois Department of Revenue. To register for this and/or all upcoming webinars, visit this [link](#).

National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (NEVI) Program Round 3 Funding Update

The third application period for Illinois's NEVI grant program is open! This round of funding will provide up to \$65 million for the construction and operation of light-duty and medium-/heavy-duty charging stations along Illinois's public roadways, including Scenic Byways, U.S. Routes, and Interstates.

The Round 3 NOFO and all application materials can be found on the IDOT [NEVI webpage here](#). The application period will be open until **February 13, 2026**.

Illinois DCEO Regional Site Readiness Program – Round 2

Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) have announced \$31.5 million in funding as part of the Regional Site Readiness Program – Round 2 – an infrastructure grant program designed to help communities attract businesses, create jobs, and support community renewal. Through the program, entities can apply for funding to begin planning and prepare unused or unsuitable sites – such as abandoned factories or brown fields – for business or community development.

The program contains two separate categories: Planning and Capital Ready. Qualified entities can apply for Planning grants up to \$150,000 and Capital Ready grants up to \$5 million. Eligible applicants include local governments,

economic development organizations, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until **March 31, 2026**, or until funds are exhausted.

A Technical Assistance webinar session recording can be accessed at this [link](#). Below are links to the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for each grant:

[Regional Site Readiness Program Round 2 - PLANNING](#)

[Regional Site Readiness Program Round 2 – CAPITAL READY](#)

The Regional Site Readiness Program will build upon the State's efforts to support communities and landowners in their site readiness planning, assessments, and infrastructure improvements. This includes addressing the financial barriers faced when gathering information and making infrastructure improvements. The program will increase the number of sites with completed due diligence and expand the pipeline for future industrial site development. DCEO is investing in planning activities such as environmental due diligence and preliminary engineering costs, as well as capital ready activities including capital improvements to road or water infrastructure to increase the number of sites ready for industrial development.

Federal Grant Support Program – Round 2

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's (DCEO)'s Federal Grant Support Program-Round 2 is open and will make \$16.9 million available to Illinois-based proposals seeking competitive federal grants. This match program will encourage more 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. For more information about the program, including links to the NOFO and application, visit this [link](#).

Illinois Tech Reuse Network

The Illinois DCEO Office of Broadband is excited to announce the launch of the Illinois Tech Reuse Network. The Illinois Tech Reuse Network (or "Tech Reuse Network") is an ongoing campaign that streamlines the collection of retired computers to increase affordable device access for Illinois residents. We are looking for organizations, chambers of commerce, and local governments to help amplify this ongoing initiative.

How does it work? The Illinois Office of Broadband is bringing together group of refurbishing organizations to safely collect, sanitize, and refurbish desktops, laptops, tablets, and other technology no longer in use. Technology is then provided to families in need of an affordable device.

How can organizations participate? Organizations can complete this form with details on retired desktops, laptops, tablets, and other devices. Then, a representative from the Tech Reuse Network will be in touch to schedule a no-cost pick up. Donated devices will be wiped, refurbished, and distributed to a community member for free or a low cost to use for school, work, healthcare, and financial literacy.

For more information about how to participate in the program, click this [link](#).

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. 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](#).

- **February 18, 2026** - Registering in SAM: This training will explain the steps required to apply for a Unique Entity Identifier, how to complete your SAM.gov registration and steps for registration renewal.
- **March 18, 2026** - Creating a GATA Registration: This training will show applicants how to create a GATA Grantee Portal Page and the different components of the GATA Portal.
- **April 15, 2026** - Notice of Funding Opportunities: This training will explain what a Notice of Funding Opportunity is and give a breakdown of the template and where to find information.
- **May 20, 2026** - 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.
- **June 17, 2026** - Overview of DCEO Programs: This training will give an overview of the Grant Program Offices at DCEO as well as our mission and background of the Agency
- **July 15, 2026** - Risk Assessments: This training will cover the required Risk Assessments for Grantees including the Internal Control Questionnaire and Programmatic Risk Assessment.
- **August 19, 2026** - Completing A Budget Application: This training will introduce the budget application and instructions on how to best complete the budget for application submission.
- **September 16, 2026** - Reporting and Supporting Documentation: This training will explain the Periodic Performance Report and Periodic Financial Report, as well as appropriate supporting documents required for submission.
- **October 21, 2026** - 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.
- **November 18, 2026** - 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

- **December 16, 2026** – Audits: This training will introduce grantees to the different Audit types, requirements, and the submission process.

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 \(illinois.gov\)](#)

- [Regional Site Readiness Program Round 2 - PLANNING](#) -Rolling but final deadline is **March 31, 2026**.
- [Regional Site Readiness Program Round 2 – CAPITAL READY](#) Rolling but final deadline is **March 31, 2026**.
- [Manufacturing Training Academies](#): Applications due **April 30, 2026**.
- [SBIR/STTR Match Program](#): Application due **June 30, 2026**
- [Community Development Block Grant Economic Development Program](#): Applications are rolling
- [CDBG Disaster Response Program](#): Applications are rolling
- [Illinois Returning Residents Clean Jobs Program \(CEJA\)](#): Applications are rolling

Other Federal and State Agency Grants & Programs

IDOA Announces \$3.6 Million in Grant Funds for Local Food Infrastructure

The Illinois Department of Agriculture (IDOA) announced plans to distribute \$3.6 million in fiscal year 2026 at the Everything Local conference in Springfield on Wednesday. The funds, which were appropriated in the FY26 state budget, will be used to support local food processing, aggregation, and distribution. Grants will be available for collaborative projects from \$1,000 to \$250,000 and for individual projects from \$1,000 to \$75,000.

“Strong agriculture depends on strong infrastructure,” **said IDOA Director Jerry Costello II**. “The Local Food Infrastructure Grant program gives Illinois farmers the processing, aggregation, and distribution capacity they need to ensure Illinois-grown food can reach consumers.”

Applications for grant funding will be available **February 18, 2026**, on the Illinois Department of Agriculture website.

Eligible applicants include Illinois residents who store, process, package, aggregate or distribute value-added agricultural products or plan to do so. These entities must meet one of the following criteria:

- an Illinois farm with fewer than 50 employees
- an Illinois cooperative with fewer than 50 employees
- an Illinois slaughter and/or processing facility with fewer than 50 employees. Slaughter and/or processing facilities must be USDA or state licensed or be a custom exempt slaughter and/or processing facility
- an Illinois food business with fewer than 50 employees
- an Illinois food hub with fewer than 50 employees
- an Illinois nonprofit organization
- a unit of local government in Illinois

To encourage further expansion of the local food industry, all grant funding must be used for purchasing, leasing to own, renting, building or installing infrastructure related to the processing, storage, aggregation, or distribution of value-added agricultural products.

Those interested can prepare for the upcoming application by pre-registering with SAM.gov and the GATA Grantee Portal.

Additional information about the program, supporting links and helpful guidance on getting ahead on the application can be found on the [Department's website](#).

ICJIA Announces \$50 Million to Restore Communities Impacted by Systemic Racism and Disinvestment

The Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA) announced two funding opportunities for the Restore, Reinvest, and Renew (R3) Program, totaling \$50 million in grants to historically underserved communities. ICJIA will allocate \$35 million to support community reentry from the criminal legal system, economic development, and civil legal aid programs, with another \$15 million allocated to support youth development and violence prevention initiatives.

R3 grant eligibility is evaluated every four years using mapped Census data and community-level data on gun injury, child poverty, unemployment, and state prison commitments and returns. Areas identified by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity as disproportionately impacted areas are also eligible. The current eligibility map identifies more than 900 eligible R3 areas.

Newer organizations often face challenges in managing grant administration, financial compliance, data tracking, and strategic leadership, diverting critical resources and time away from direct intervention work. ICJIA's Institute to Innovate (i2i) program offers tailored grant readiness and administration, organizational development, and performance and data management training designed to set R3 grantees up for success. Since its inception in 2021, ICJIA has awarded more than \$330 million in R3 grant funding to community organizations across Illinois.

Application materials, including instructions for applying, are available at <https://r3.illinois.gov/>. Applications must be submitted by **March 6, 2026**.

Illinois EPA Driving A Cleaner Illinois

Illinois EPA is accepting applications to fund a portion of the eligible costs associated with the replacement (not repower) of eligible existing and licensed on-road diesel Class 4-8 medium- and heavy-duty local freight trucks (at least 14,001 lbs. GVWR) and Class 8 port drayage trucks (at least 33,001 lbs. GVWR). Each new replacement truck must be of the same type and class as the retired truck and be a licensed on-road all-electric Class 4-8 medium- and heavy-duty local freight truck or Class 8 port drayage truck (hereinafter "all-electric trucks" or "electric trucks") located and operated in any of the three VW Priority Areas established in the Beneficial Mitigation Plan.

The types of trucks covered under this NOFO are those used to haul and deliver freight or cargo, including delivery/box trucks, waste haulers, Class 8 port drayage trucks, landscape trucks, dump trucks, and freight/transport

trucks. If the existing diesel truck to be replaced and the proposed new electric truck is not routinely hauling any type of freight or cargo by design or actual use, it is ineligible for this NOFO. In addition to providing funding for new all-electric trucks, Illinois EPA will also fund a portion of necessary new Level 2 or DCFC charging equipment if charging infrastructure is needed.

Applicants may find the NOFO and all application materials on the [Driving a Cleaner Illinois](#) website and also at Illinois' [GATA webpage](#). Applicants must pre-qualify prior to application submission. The application period will remain open until funds are depleted. Applications should be signed, scanned and submitted to epa.vwgrants@illinois.gov.

The Illinois EPA will accept applications for eligible new all-electric trucks and any necessary charging infrastructure for the trucks requested in this application. From a business or government entity located in the following VW priority area and the eligible trucks will operate in the 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.

For a complete list of current IEPA funding opportunities, visit this [link](#).

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.

Illinois Electric Vehicle Rebate Program – EXTENDED!

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced an extension to the current Electric Vehicle (EV) Rebate Program application cycle from January 31, 2026 to May 31, 2026. Illinois EPA will process all applications received through January 31, 2026, including non-low income, given those individuals applied with the expectation that rebates would be processed at the end of the initial application cycle. After January 31, 2026, Illinois EPA will again prioritize low income applications as specified in the program requirements, which are available on the [Illinois EPA's EV Rebate Program webpage](#). Updated forms and instructions to submit a rebate application are currently available on the webpage.

The Illinois General Assembly appropriated \$14 million to the Illinois EPA for the current fiscal year (FY26), which ends on June 30, 2026. Current applications received represent a fraction of that funding. However, actual funding amounts will be determined by the amount of money available in the Electric Vehicle Rebate Fund. Rebates will be issued to eligible individuals as funding is available.

As a reminder, program updates effective in FY26 include:

- **Limits on the price of the vehicle:** An eligible vehicle, as defined by the EV Rebate Act, is one with a selling price not exceeding \$80,000 as shown on the bill of sale.
- **Change to the rebate amount:** The rebate is \$2,000 for an eligible new or used electric vehicle. Low-income applicants are eligible to receive an additional \$2,000 (\$4,000 total rebate). The rebate amount for eligible motorcycles remains the same, \$1,500 for all eligible applicants.
- **Cap on the income of applicants:** An “eligible applicant” is defined as “persons and families whose income does not exceed 500% of the federal poverty line for the current State fiscal year and who may not be claimed as a dependent.” The application materials will include a table on income eligibility.
- **Change to the definition of low-income applicant:** A “low-income applicant” is defined as “persons and families whose income does not exceed 80% of the regional or county median income for the current State fiscal year, as established by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development's Illinois Income Limits by metropolitan area and county.” Median income can be found on the HUD website at [Illinois Low Income Limits by County](#).
- **Longer time to apply from the date of vehicle purchase:** Applicants have 180 days from the date of purchase to apply (up from 90 days previously). Applications must be submitted during an open application period.

Full eligibility requirements are found in the [EV Rebate Act](#) and associated Illinois EPA program rules. Questions about the EV Rebate Program may be submitted to EPA.EV@Illinois.gov.

Helpful Resources

Illinois Catalog of State Financial Assistance

As part of the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act, the State of Illinois maintains a “Catalog of State Financial Assistance” (CSFA). It includes information on state agencies that have active grant programs, a list of active grant programs, and a list of current funding opportunities. It also includes a link to subscribe to a weekly mailing list of new opportunities. For more information, click this [link](#).

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

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 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 in increasing their capacity, growing revenue, and enhancing 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 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. To view and apply for these jobs, please click this [link](#).

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](#)