



## Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

### Report to the Restore Illinois Collaborative Commission September 1, 2020

This report is submitted in response to ILCS 20 605/605-1045, requiring the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to submit a report not less than every 30 days, beginning July 1, regarding the status of current and proposed economic revitalization efforts in response to the COVID-19 crisis. This report will be updated monthly through the end of calendar year 2020.

The report to the Commission provides a brief summary of the Restore Illinois plan and metrics and a summary of ongoing recovery efforts, including:

- Support to impacted businesses through grants, loans, and other forms of relief.
- Support to residents through job training and other services for low-income residents, such as LIHEAP and basic needs assistance.
- Targeted support in communities most impacted by this crisis through grants, technical assistance, and outreach.

DCEO and the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) have both appeared before the Commission over the last month, on August 18 and August 25, respectively. In addition, DCEO submitted follow-up information in response to questions posed by members. The Department's staff will continue to work with the Commission to schedule future meetings and provide any information requested by the Commission.

#### **Restore Illinois**

Central to Governor Pritzker's strategy for containing the spread of COVID-19 while encouraging a safe economic recovery is the Restore Illinois plan, as updated by [Actions to Combat a Resurgence of COVID-19](#). Restore Illinois relies on core health metrics (COVID test positivity rates, hospital admissions, ICU and other hospital capacity indicators) to determine distinct business, education, and recreation activities that can safely operate in accordance with guidance informed by IDPH, public health experts and the latest science.

Core health metrics likewise drive mitigation measures that may be required due to local outbreaks of COVID-19. The resurgence prevention plan outlines three tiers of general and industry-specific mitigations that can be acted upon to prevent a renewed spread of COVID-19. To provide for a more granular approach, mitigation will be applied on a regional basis based on the 11 Emergency Medical Services regions. These strategies reflect a tailored and surgical alternative to reverting to an earlier Phase as originally envisioned.

The following metrics will be used to determine when the spread of the virus in a region requires additional mitigation measures:

- Sustained increase in 7-day rolling average (7 out of 10 days) in the positivity rate and one of the following:
  - o Sustained 7-day increase in hospital admissions for a COVID-19 like illness
  - o Reduction in hospital capacity threatening surge capabilities (ICU capacity or medical/surgical beds under 20%)
- OR three consecutive days averaging greater than or equal to 8% positivity rate

On August 28, the Illinois Department of Public Health (IDPH) reported that 30 counties in Illinois reached a warning level for COVID-19. A county enters a warning level when two or more risk indicators that measure the amount of COVID-19 experience an increase. These counties saw cases or outbreaks associated with weddings, businesses, neighborhood gatherings, parties, long-term care facilities and other congregate settings, travel to neighboring states, bars, sports camps, and spread among members of the same household who are not isolating at home. Cases connected to schools are also beginning to be reported. These metrics are intended to be used for local level awareness to help local leaders, businesses, local health departments, and the public make informed decisions about personal and family gatherings, as well as what activities they choose to do.

Since announcing this framework for managing regional resurgences in COVID-19 infections, the state has implemented mitigation efforts in Regions 4 and 7.

- **Region 4 (Metro East):** IDPH announced tier 1 mitigations on August 16<sup>th</sup> and stricter mitigations on September 1<sup>st</sup>. These mitigations include a prohibition on indoor dining and bar service, reservation requirements for patrons in bars and restaurants, a ban on party buses, more restrictive hours and capacity limits for casinos, and more restrictive limits to social gatherings.
- **Region 7 (Will/Kankakee Counties):** On August 24, Governor Pritzker and IDPH announced tier 1 mitigations including a prohibition on indoor dining and bar service, reservation requirements for patrons in bars and restaurants, a ban on party buses, more restrictive hours and capacity limits for casinos, and more restrictive limits to social gatherings.

Complete information regarding specific mitigations applicable by region can be found at:

<https://dceocovid19resources.com/restore-illinois>. IDPH will track the positivity rates in affected regions over a 14-day monitoring period to determine if mitigations can be relaxed, if additional mitigations are required, or if current mitigations should remain in place.

In addition, on August 25 the Governor announced revised statewide guidelines for restaurants and bars to operate safely and help prevent the spread of COVID-19. Based on a recent increase in cases, these latest guidelines will require patrons to wear a mask during any interaction with wait staff, food service workers and other employees at bars and restaurants. Face coverings must be worn over the nose and mouth when patrons are approached and served by staff, including but not limited to when employees take patrons' orders, deliver food and beverages, and service tables. This guidance also applies to other facilities with food services areas that are currently subject to the Restore Illinois guidance, such as indoor recreational facilities, museums and entertainment venues.

## **State of Illinois Support for Businesses, Communities and Families**

Information provided below provides an update on new or existing program initiatives since the previous Restore Illinois Collaborative Report was delivered to the Commission on July 31, 2020.

## Resources for Businesses

Given the significant impacts businesses face in the current climate, the State has established various business assistance programs aimed to help small businesses with the most urgent needs and designed in a way to ensure assistance is accessible by all Illinois communities.

### Business Interruption Grant (BIG) Program -- DCEO

- Budgeted amount: \$540 million funded by the CARES Act.
- BIG provides relief for costs incurred to qualifying businesses due to COVID-related business interruption.
- Half of the funding is allocated to assist childcare providers across the state with reopening in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic through the Child Care Restoration Grant program, which is being administered by the Illinois Network of Child Care Resource and Referral Agencies (INCCRRA).
- At least 30% of all funds across the program are dedicated to Disproportionately Impacted Areas (DIAs), or low-income areas that have had high rates of COVID-19 cases. 175 zip codes across the state have been identified as a DIAs with the majority being outside Chicago.
- **Results of First Wave of BIG Grants:** On August 12, the Governor and DCEO announced the first round of BIG awards through which the State will award grants to businesses suffering losses due to the economic downturn caused by the pandemic. The highlights of this wave:
  - **\$48.6 million** in grants to 2,800 small businesses located in 400 individual cities across 81 counties.
  - More than \$11.7 million to businesses in downstate communities
  - More than half of the grant awards and total funding have gone to DIAs.
- For the next round of the BIG program, DCEO is investing at least \$1 million to build out a network of technical assistance and referral partners that will assist businesses in applying, with a particular focus on businesses in DIAs that often struggle to access support resources.

### Rebuild Distressed Communities – DCEO

- Rebuild Distressed Communities is a \$25 million economic recovery program to strengthen Illinois commercial corridors that sustained property damage as a result of civil unrest during protest and demonstrations on or after May 25th, 2020.
- The program will prioritize small businesses, underinsured or uninsured businesses, businesses that have a high community impact, and businesses in communities that have experienced historic disinvestment. It also includes provisions to prioritize partnerships with BEP-certified contractors to do the repair work. Applications to serve as partners assisting DCEO in administering this program are closed. DCEO is evaluating applicant proposals and anticipates that businesses will be able to apply to receive assistance in mid-September.

### Downstate Small Business Stabilization Program – DCEO

- \$20 million program using federal Community Development Block Grant funds for small businesses in suburban and rural counties across Illinois, providing grants of up to \$25,000 to small businesses in communities served by DCEO's Office of Community Development.
- These grants will offer businesses of up to 50 employees the opportunity to partner with their local governments to obtain grants of up to \$25,000 in working capital.
- The Department is completing a final review of the next group of Downstate Small Business Stabilization applications and expects to make awards later this week. Based on preliminary totals, at least \$1.6 million will assist at least 81 businesses. In addition, appeals on grant decisions have been evaluated and 10 additional businesses will receive a total of \$265,000. This will raise the total amount awarded to more

than \$5 million. The Department will continue to accept applications until funding is exhausted.

#### **Fast Track Infrastructure – DCEO**

- Fast-Track Public Infrastructure Grants are a capital infrastructure initiative intended to accelerate planned public infrastructure projects around the state. Rebuild Illinois funding is being directed towards local public infrastructure projects that are ready to begin work this summer, as many local governments face lost revenues, impacting their ability to finance these projects.
- On August 19, DCEO announced \$24.8 million in awards for construction projects in 17 communities across 9 economic development regions including utility projects, street infrastructure, public facilities, and large-scale playground modernization plans. A list of grantees is available on the DCEO web site here: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Media/PressReleases/Pages/PR081920.aspx>.
- These projects will commence within 90 days pursuant to the grant agreement and are expected to create nearly 1,000 construction jobs.

#### **Opportunity Zones – DCEO**

- Rebuild Illinois funding has been set aside to support the Opportunity Zones program which encourages long-term investment and job creation in 327 underserved communities across the state.
- On August 19, DCEO announced a \$14.7 million investment in Illinois Opportunity Zones across 10 major infrastructure projects. These projects will pave the way for a total \$30.3 million investment, with private matching funds that will support costs of development associated with affordable housing, community development, and commercial real estate projects. A list of grantees is available on the DCEO web site here: <https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Media/PressReleases/Pages/PR081920.aspx>.

#### **Advantage Illinois Loan Payment Relief – DCEO**

- Advantage Illinois is DCEO's loan participation program for small businesses. It partners with local banks to provide a low-interest option for small businesses looking to expand operations.
- DCEO is encouraging and automatically approving adjustments to the terms of existing Advantage Illinois and FAME loans. These adjustments could include either 3 months of no payments or 6 months of interest-only payments.
- As of late August, 18 companies have received approximately \$463,500 in relief.
- Program participants interested in exploring relief options can contact their lender or reach out to DCEO at [CEO.AdvantageIllinois@Illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.AdvantageIllinois@Illinois.gov).

### **Support for Residents and Families**

The following programs were established to provide financial relief in the form of grants, emergency services, regulatory protection, and more to households and families facing hardships during this crisis

#### **Help Illinois Families - Emergency Support for Households (Low Income Home Energy Assistance Block Grant and Community Services Block Grant) -- DCEO**

- A \$275 million program, including \$90 million from the CARES Act that bolsters existing programs to provide food, rent, utilities, temporary shelter, medicine and other essential household services to lower income families impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.
- Eligibility for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) in fiscal year 2021 has been expanded from 150% to 200% of the Federal Poverty Level As a result, an additional 1 million income-

qualified Illinoisans will be eligible for assistance this year. Applicants will be served on a first-come, first-served basis until funding is exhausted.

- LIHEAP provides assistance to lower income households to receive assistance with home energy services, including heating and cooling.
- The Community Services Block Grant (CSBG) program supports projects that lessen poverty in communities; address the needs of low-income individuals including the homeless, migrants and the elderly; and provides services and activities addressing employment, education, housing, nutrition, emergency services and health.
- DCEO has launched a new remote application process that will provide applicants the option to begin the intake process online or over the phone with the assistance of a live agent. The State's new website and call center is accessible for all residents – with assistance provided in English and Spanish, and other languages assisted through translation.
- Since the Help Illinois Families initiative was launched June 15, DCEO has more than 50,000 requests for assistance through the on-line pre-application form, signed up 45,000 customers for LIHEAP benefits, and provided 12,000 residents with services through CSBG.
- Residents can obtain more information and begin their application at this link:  
<https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/CommunityServices/HomeWeatherization/CommunityActionAgencies/Pages/helpIllinoisFamilies.aspx>

### **Rental and mortgage assistance -- IHDA**

- Governor Pritzker has extended the moratorium on evictions through September 22 to protect renters unable to pay due to the economic distress created by COVID crisis. This also minimizes the spread of the virus by not forcing residents to move to new housing or shelters.
- The **Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA)** program will provide renters impacted by COVID-19 \$5,000 for back rent and prepay through 2020, or until funds are exhausted.
  - IHDA will accept applications August 10 through August 28
  - To be eligible, an applicant must have an unpaid rent balance that began on or after March 1, 2020 due to loss of income related to COVID-19 pandemic and have household income at or below 80% of the area median income.
- The **Emergency Mortgage Assistance (EMA)** program will provide homeowners impacted by COVID-19 up to \$15,000 to reinstate their mortgage and prepay through 2020 or until funds are exhausted.
  - IHDA will accept applications August 24 through September 4
  - Household income must be at or below 120% Area Median Income
  - To be eligible, an applicant must have a past due balance or a forbearance balance that began sometime on or after March 1, 2020 due to loss of income related to COVID-19 pandemic and have household income at or below 120% of area median income.
- Residents can find additional information and apply for emergency housing assistance here:  
<https://www.ihda.org/about-ihda/covid-19-housing-resources-information/>.

### **Job Training and Placement**

The state offers a range of workforce training and assistance programs, which are being recalibrated to assist both

employers and workers in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

#### **Apprenticeship Training Grants – DCEO**

- On July 14, the administration announced that DCEO is awarding grants to 25 organizations across the state to expand training programs and employer partnerships, with an emphasis on growth in underserved communities.
- The \$4.7 million investment announced in July will expand the Illinois Apprenticeship Program to serve an additional 568 residents in training programs over the next two years. With this expansion, the Illinois Apprenticeship Program will see a record level of investment of \$20 million, providing capacity to serve a record 17,000 participants in 2020.
- This investment is made possible by a \$2.8 million grant from the U.S. Department of Labor awarded to DCEO as well as \$1.9 million in discretionary workforce funds invested by the state.
- Residents can learn more about how to access these programs at <https://www.illinoisworknet.com/ApprenticeshipIL/Pages/default.aspx>

#### **Get Hired Illinois – DCEO**

- In May, the Governor announced the launch of Get Hired Illinois – a new portal designed to connect workers with available job and career training opportunities across the state of Illinois. Prospective employers and workers can access the portal at this link: <https://www2.illinois.gov/GetHired/Pages/default.aspx>
- More than 400 new employers have signed up for Get Hired since the website launched, adding 208 virtual job fairs and 12,966 job listings to the portal. In total, this portal provides Illinois job seekers access to nearly 60,000 jobs connected through the state’s webpage.

#### **Coursera On-Line Workforce Training – DCEO**

- The State of Illinois has partnered with Coursera, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Northwestern University, and the University of Chicago to offer free online career training geared toward helping Illinoisans who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Free virtual training courses will provide training and credentialing that will help ready dislocated workers for jobs in Information Technology (IT) and other marketable fields.
- TechReady Illinois is also included in the partnership with Illinois and Coursera offering a set of their courses through the Coursera Platform. The TechReady Illinois is an effort to help Illinois residents hurt by COVID-19 gain new digital skills at steeply discounted tuition rates.
- Since the beginning of June, 5,158 invitations were sent through Illinois workNet to individuals interested in taking courses on the Illinois IT Training on Coursera. Of these, 3,456 learners created an account and 2,619 enrolled in one or more courses.

#### **Disaster Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant -- DCEO**

- DCEO was awarded \$8,325,000 from the National Dislocated Worker Grant Program to prioritize services to individuals most impacted by the crisis, including low wage and traditionally lower skilled individuals who have been laid off or furloughed.
- Funds will be utilized to address immediate actions to stabilize families during this unprecedented time of work separation. Illinois will also utilize the funds to support humanitarian and cleanup recovery needs by providing Disaster Relief Employment.

- Eight Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs) applied for and received \$8.1 million in funding to support 367 eligible individuals with Disaster Relief Employment, Occupational Training and Support Services. Worksites are being established to assist communities in their effort to mitigate COVID-19 spread, with 6 temporary workers enrolled to date.

#### **Employment Recovery National Dislocated Worker Grant -- DCEO**

- DCEO was awarded \$8,325,000 from the National Dislocated Worker Grant Program to provide workers with essential skills training and incumbent worker training targeted at specific industries (including but not limited to hospitality and restaurants) where low skilled and low wage workers who have been disproportionately impacted by this crisis.
- Illinois will provide employment and training services to dislocated workers to assist them in obtaining unsubsidized employment, adapting the types of services and the delivery of services to meet the changing economy and changing customer needs while following health emergency safety practices and requirements, including abiding by Illinois' Stay-at-Home orders.
- Eight Local Workforce Innovation Areas (LWIAs) applied for and received \$8.1 million in funding to support 930 Dislocated Workers with Career, Training and Support Services. These grants are in the final stages of being established and LWIAs will be serving customers upon completion.

#### **Summer Youth Employment Program – IDHS**

- The Governor announced on July 16 that State has dedicated \$9.3 million to support the Summer Youth Employment Program (SYEP) to provide training and find work for young people aged 16-24 amidst the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.
- The program funded 30 providers in 10 counties hardest hit by COVID-19 (Cook, Champaign, Lake, Macon, Madison, McLean, Peoria, St. Clair, Stephenson, and Winnebago).
- As of July 2020, there 2,499 young adults in the above counties were provided opportunities to develop workplace skills and gain work experience while exploring potential career pathways.

#### **Technical Assistance and Outreach**

Many of those that have been hardest hit by this crisis are also those that may have the most difficulty or least experience accessing government support.

#### **Office of Minority Economic Empowerment – DCEO**

- OMEE promotes economic development opportunities for all minority communities across the state through targeted programs, resources, and advocacy.
- From March through late August 2020, OMEE had hosted 157 webinars and workshops with approximately 4,462 attendees on DCEO COVID-19 State and Federal programs, Restore Illinois guidelines, BIG technical assistance, business support, and other assistance as needed.

#### **Rapid Response Services for Layoff Aversion and Job Training – DCEO**

- Rapid Response is a proactive, business-focused program to avert layoffs and plant closing through quick coordination of service and the provision of immediate aid to companies and their affected workers.
- When layoffs cannot be averted, laid off workers are connected to job training and placement services.
- Rapid Response teams have worked with 607 businesses since March to provide services to mitigate layoffs that affected approximately 60,443 workers. \$3.5 million in layoff aversion funds have been awarded.

### **Regional Economic Development Outreach (Team RED) – DCEO**

- DCEO has conducted extensive outreach to a wide range of constituencies to ensure businesses are familiar with available programs and assistance. Through August 26, DCEO has conducted COVID-19 related outreach for at least 8,225 small businesses, 464 local Chambers of Commerce and 600 economic development organizations.
- Team RED has also launched outreach to local units of government regarding CURE program assistance. This outreach includes emails to approximately 5,600 special taxing districts, 1,000 phone calls and webinars for a collective 1,500 attendees.