



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

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STATE OF ILLINOIS CONVENES EVENTS TO HONOR LATINX BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES FOR HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

Series of workshops and virtual events to link Latinx businesses from across Illinois with resources needed to grow, thrive and succeed in a number of industries and amid the COVID-19 environment

CHICAGO – The State of Illinois today announced a series of events planned by the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), the Department of Central Management Services (CMS) and other state agencies in celebration of National Hispanic Heritage month, beginning September 15 and running through October 15. In partnership with businesses, chambers, cultural and community organizations and industry experts from across the state, these events will celebrate the culture and contributions of Hispanics throughout Illinois and provide tips on how entrepreneurs and business owners can access free resources to strengthen their business.

“Illinois’ Hispanic and Latinx businesses are essential to the fabric of our communities, and their continued growth is vital for our economy,” **said Erin B. Guthrie, Director of DCEO**. “As we celebrate 2020’s National Hispanic Heritage Month, our administration is committed to lifting up all of our Hispanic owned businesses now more than ever before given the profound impact COVID-19 has had on these communities. That’s why we are thrilled to team up with a broad range of partners this month to raise awareness around the obstacles our Hispanic businesses and communities face and to partner on solutions and supports that will allow them to grow and thrive.”

The events planned will be offered in Spanish and English, and include topics such as accessing capital, branding, grants application, and special panels with subject matter experts in the industries of film, manufacturing and government contracting. The Illinois Department of Central Management Service’s (CMS) Business Enterprise Program (BEP) will participate in several events and offer training and technical assistance to business owners to assist them with certification options. BEP certification ensures Latinx and other minority-owned businesses in every community have the access and opportunity to participate in the economic future of Illinois. BEP’s focus is to support Illinois communities and ensure economic inclusiveness throughout our State.

“CMS is proud to celebrate National Hispanic Heritage Month as we continue to support the growth and economic development of Latinx-owned businesses throughout the state,” **said Director Janel L. Forde, Illinois Department of Central Management Services (CMS)**. “We are committed to increasing diversity in contracting and hiring to ensure that underserved communities are represented and have a pathway to success.”

Events for businesses begin this week and are free to join. More information on how to register is found below, or on [DCEO's website](#).

September 17, 2020 at 9:00 a.m., “Access to Capital” (en español)

DCEO-OMEE, LULAC Illinois, Hispanic Chamber of Lake County (HCLC), and the Latino Round Table of Southwestern Illinois will convene a discussion on financial resources.

To register please visit: <https://bit.ly/2QMZ42Y>

September 23, 2020 at 10:00 a.m., “SBDC Assistance & Best Practices for Business Owners” (en español)

DCEO-OMEE and the Illinois SBDC Network will conduct a workshop for business owners and a discussion around best practice for businesses as well free resources for business owners.

To register please visit: <https://bit.ly/3iw0wTB>

September 29, 2020 at 3:00 p.m., “OMEE Grant: Best Practices”

DCEO's Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) and Office of Accountability will host a workshop to provide guidance around the process for applying for state grants, such as the OMEE grant.

To register please visit: <https://bit.ly/2FrGv28>

September 30, 2020 at 4:00 p.m., “Equity in Film: Latinx Perspectives”

The Illinois Film Office and OMEE will join filmmaker Erika Valenciana, filmmaker Christian Mejía, and Latino Film Festival Pepe Vargas for a talk about the importance of racial equity in film. The panel will be moderated by Film programmer Raul Benitez.

To register please visit: <http://bit.ly/3mnaOYz>

October 1, 2020 at 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., “The Brand of U & How to Work It”

DCEO - OMEE, Groupon, LULAC - Latina Entrepreneurs NOW, Latina Executive and Entrepreneur Network (L.E.E.N.), Mujeres Latinas en Accion and Chicago Latina Moms will host a workshop on branding in today's COVID-19 environment. The workshop will cover how entrepreneurs can brand and leverage technology to pivot their business to work for them during COVID-19 and will feature opening remarks from Deputy Governor Sol Flores. Learn from business ‘disruptors’ on how to capitalize using innovative approaches to position your business for success.

To register please visit: <gr.pn/brandofu>

October 6, 2020 at 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., “Regulations, Workforce, and Finances”

DCEO's Office of Employment and Training and OMEE, the Greater Peoria Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and Northwest Hispanic Chamber of Commerce will host a workshop on how to obtain applicable business licenses from IDFPR, how to hire and expand workforce, and business finances.

To register please visit: <https://bit.ly/2Rs4COx>

October 7, 2020 at 2:00 – 3:30 p.m., “Latinas in Manufacturing”

DCEO's Office of Employment and Training and OMEE, and Hispanic Alliance for Career Enhancement (HACE) President and CEO Patricia Mota will celebrate the confluence of Hispanic Heritage Month, National Women's Small Business Month, and Manufacturing Month (all in October) with a webinar featuring how Latinas in manufacturing got into the business, pivoted, and expanded into leadership roles.

To register please visit: <https://bit.ly/2ZBqLAW>

October 13, 2020 at 10:00 a.m., “Certification and Government Contracting”

Join DCEO-OMEE and CMS' Business Enterprise Program (BEP) for a discussion about how to get your business certified and expand into government contracting. Also joining Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus, Illinois

Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Aurora Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.

To register please visit: <https://bit.ly/35G4IID>

October 15, 2020 at 2:00 p.m., “Certification and Government Contracting” (en español)

DCEO-OMEE will join the U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Ramiro Cavazos, CMS’ Business Enterprise Program (BEP) for a discussion about how to get your business certified and expand into government contracting. Also joining Illinois Legislative Latino Caucus, Groupon, Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, Aurora Regional Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and Mujeres Latinas en Accion.

To register please visit: <https://bit.ly/2ZG6wle>

“We are thrilled to partner with the State of Illinois, the Illinois Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, and the Dept. of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (DCEO) on these events which will provide the Illinois Hispanic business community with the kind of support needed in today’s economy to build, grow and continuously innovate their business and their brand for success,” **said Ramiro Cavazos, President of U.S. Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.** “While Hispanic businesses across the country continue to face many of the same challenges as a result of COVID-19, we are glad to see Governor Pritzker’s administration playing an essential role in administering programs and supports that will help our communities weather the storm, and emerge stronger on the other side.”

DCEO-led panels this month will engage businesses around resources available across a wide range of business assistance programs created in response to the COVID-19 crisis, with over \$500 million in funding launched to date. This includes the recent announcement of \$220 million in additional small business grants made possible by Governor Pritzker’s Business Interruption Grants program, otherwise known as BIG. Built on an equity framework, the BIG program so far has worked to help alleviate losses experienced by over 2,800 businesses in over 400 Illinois communities – with 50 percent of awardees minority owned.

“In recognition of this year’s National Hispanic Heritage Month, we are proud to honor our Illinois Hispanic businesses across the state – from food trucks to Fortune 500 companies,” **said Jaime di Paulo, President of IL Hispanic Chamber of Commerce.** “Given the challenges our Hispanic communities face during COVID-19 and beyond, we are glad to see the State of Illinois team stepping up with a variety of resources this month and since the crisis hit months ago that will help small businesses recover, reopen and plan for their futures.”

The Illinois Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) plays a crucial role in providing support to minority owned businesses of all sizes and types, including connection with grants, technical assistance and incentives to bolster minority entrepreneurs and minority-owned enterprises.

“Throughout Hispanic Heritage Month, we not only celebrate the achievements of those who are of Latinx decent, but we also take a moment to honor our rich history, our struggles, and more importantly our contributions to this great state and nation,” **said Dr. Maggie Rivera, IL Migrant Council President/CEO and President of League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) Illinois Chapter.** “We are proud to partner with the state to promote these Latinx-focused workshops and virtual events to educate and connect our businesses from across Illinois with the necessary resources to grow, thrive and succeed. As the largest minority group, it is imperative to tell our story and acknowledge the amazing contributions and sacrifices of the Latinx community not only during Hispanic Heritage Month, but throughout the year.”

For more information on National Hispanic Heritage Month events planned for businesses, contact Diana Alfaro, Latino Business Development Manager, at diana.alfaro@illinois.gov. To learn more about ongoing resources and programs for businesses, follow DCEO on social media @IllinoisDCEO or sign up to receive the newsletter.

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