



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

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Contact: DCEO.Media@illinois.gov

Gov. Pritzker and DCEO Launch \$3.5 Million Investment in ‘Regional Planning to Spur Economic Recovery’ (RISE) Program

Local grants will empower Illinois communities to develop plans to promote long-term economic recovery

CHICAGO - Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced a \$3.5 million investment to accelerate local economic recovery initiatives. Through the launch of the Research in Illinois to Spur Economic Development (RISE) initiative, the State will offer competitive grants to help local governments and economic development organizations (EDOs) create new regional or local plans to promote economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. After the grants are awarded and plans are created, DCEO will offer grantees the opportunity to apply for funding for specific projects included in their plans. This program is funded by the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA).

“My administration is launching the RISE grant program to ensure an economic recovery that puts the local needs of communities at the heart of the conversation,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “With these grants, local governments can better craft economic development plans that reflect the specific impact of the pandemic on their region. This is a key component of my \$1.5 billion economic plan to revitalize the economy, and I invite communities in need to apply for this support.”

With the RISE Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO), DCEO is seeking grant applications to accelerate Illinois’ economic recovery by developing new or updating local, regional, or community-centered economic plans. Grant awards will be up to \$150,000. RISE empowers local governments and regional EDOs to create meaningful plans that align with the state’s overarching economic plan, with a focus on specific initiatives and investments that support recovery from the pandemic.

“Under Governor Pritzker’s leadership, we are helping local Illinois communities identify what they need to build back stronger and better, which will help continue our state’s robust economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic,” **said DCEO Acting Director Sylvia I. Garcia.** “The RISE program will provide the resources localities need to conduct meaningful economic planning processes that utilize the expertise of local and regional partners who know the needs of their communities best. These plans will include tangible next steps to help communities recover from the pandemic – like reactivating commercial

corridors, building more affordable housing, or making investments that improve quality of life – that will then be eligible for follow on implementation grants from DCEO.”

Grants will reimburse awardees for costs associated with developing an economic recovery plan, including salaries or contractual costs, research, outreach, and public meetings as well as expenses associated with administering the grant, such as meeting space rentals and printing. The [NOFO application](#) is open and will continue accepting applications through May 9, 2022.

DCEO is accepting applications from units of local government and economic development organizations. The program calls for plans that will address job losses and business closures, adaptation to shifting economic trends in the area, and critical economic and public health infrastructure. Applications for recipients that face financial and capacity constraints, or that propose a plan for an area with a concentration of underserved communities or a high impact of COVID-19 will be prioritized for an award. Following the first phase of RISE, grantees will have the opportunity to apply for grants to fund specific initiatives or investments outlined in their economic plans.

Plans will be required to include specific initiatives or capital investments that will accelerate recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and that are eligible for ARPA funding. Regions covered by plans can have a regional scope or be more focused on a community level. Grantees will be required to assemble stakeholders to represent a community or region, conduct research on prospective economic assets and challenges, conduct outreach with local and regional stakeholders, and develop strategies that address the impacts of COVID-19 and that are tailored to the strengths and vulnerabilities of the community and region. Where possible, community plans developed through the RISE program should align with goals and areas of focus included in the Governor Pritzker’s 5-year Economic Plan to Revitalize the Economy.

"Illinois has done our own economic planning, and this opportunity shows that what started in 2019 was just the beginning. Now it's time for local communities to create plans of their own," **said Sen. Elgie Sims (D-Chicago)**. "I'm calling on communities across Illinois to dream big and put pen to paper on economic development."

"Central Illinois is blessed with so many great economic assets, and by working together to plan for the future we can identify even more opportunities for growth," **said Sen. Dave Koehler (D-Peoria)**. "With Governor Pritzker's Rebuild Illinois and President Biden's Infrastructure Plan, we need to be ready to take advantage of every opportunity."

"Long-range planning is key to economic development, so I am thrilled that DCEO is making this opportunity available to communities across Illinois" **said Rep. Justin Slaughter (D-Chicago)**. "I look forward to seeing local governments and economic development organizations work together to identify our weaknesses, build upon our strengths, and ultimately set our state up for success."

“In a state as large and diverse as Illinois, it is to be expected that recovery from the pandemic will be uneven. DCEO funding to support local units of government and economic development organizations will help spur economic recovery in places that need help the most,” **said Chris Merrett, Director of the Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs, Western Illinois University**.

“I’m looking forward to the Governor’s RISE program, because it will help communities do the very important work of planning. Community based economic development planning is crucial for regions that are working to improve and preserve local economies,” **said Anne Silvis, Assistant Dean for Community and Economic Development, University of Illinois Extension.** “Planning provides a framework to identify goals and actions steps. Without a plan, regional economic development is more difficult. Without planning, piecemeal economic development efforts are less efficient and effective. Communities we work with are doing everything they can to be good stewards of their resources. The planning that they can do, through the RISE program, will help communities allocate resources more effectively.”

RISE is a key component of Governor Pritzker’s plan to revitalize the economy, bring people back to work and support local business and communities amid the fallout of the pandemic. This program builds on the \$250 million Back to Business (B2B) grants program, \$45 million Rebuild Illinois Downtown and Main Streets, and \$10 million for Tourism Attraction and Festival Promotion grants. These programs are underway now, and actively awarding funds for communities and businesses across the state.

The deadline to apply for the Research in Illinois to Spur Economic Development (RISE) Grant Program is May 9, 2022. DCEO will be hosting an overview and technical assistance session on the new program on March 17th for prospective applicants - register online for the free webinar [here](#). For updates on the program or other upcoming economic recovery grant opportunities, please check DCEO's website.

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