



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

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Gov. Pritzker Announces \$25 Million Available in B2B Grants for New Businesses
New businesses launched in 2020 or 2021 eligible for up to \$30,000 in grants; Applications open on November 30

CHICAGO — Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced \$25 million in available grant funding through the Back to Business (B2B) NewBiz program. Following state recovery programming for businesses totaling \$1.5 billion, the latest American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-funded opportunity is designed to provide additional support for businesses in hard-hit sectors who launched during the pandemic. Businesses that launched in 2020 or 2021 and remain in operation have faced significant impacts during the pandemic, but they have not been eligible for other federal or state relief programming since they were not operational prior to the pandemic.

To provide hands-on support and raise awareness about the program, the State has mobilized a network of nearly 100 community navigators across Illinois. Applicants are encouraged to visit b2bnewbiz.com to learn more and apply.

“Small business owners contribute to our thriving state economy every day, often taking on enormous risk to do so—but no business owner could have been prepared for the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic,” **said Governor JB Pritzker.** “These grants will support those who faced down unprecedented circumstances and met them with innovation and entrepreneurial spirit who may have been left behind in previous aid efforts.”

“Small businesses and entrepreneurs are the backbone of our economy, driving our state forward. B2B NewBiz grants will ensure Illinois' newer small businesses can continue to thrive, especially those most affected during the pandemic,” **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton.** “I'm proud of our hardworking small business owners for making Illinois the best place to live, work and do business.”

Applications are open from November 30 through January 11, 2024, and awards are expected to be made several weeks after the deadline date. All eligible applicants will receive a grant as long as the business meets eligibility requirements and submits proper documentation and attestations.

“Thousands of courageous entrepreneurs in Illinois launched businesses in the height of the pandemic,” **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards**. “B2B NewBiz makes funding available to new small business owners who were ineligible for pandemic relief based on their start date and supports small businesses across the state that are the heart of our economy.”

DCEO has enlisted a robust network of nearly 100 community navigators to conduct outreach and provide technical assistance in the hardest hit communities. Community navigators will be conducting outreach, hosting webinars, and supporting prospective applicants to prepare before the application opens on November 30. This is in addition to available small business support available through Illinois’ network of Small Business Development Centers (SBDCs).

In order to manage a high volume of applications in a timely manner, DCEO has enlisted a program administrator – Lendistry – to support with application review, provide technical portal support for applicants, manage the development of the application portal and provide support in processing payments.

“We’re proud to partner with DCEO and the state of Illinois to help small business owners who were brave enough to open up shop in the middle of the biggest disruption our generation has seen,” **said Lendistry CEO Everett K. Sands**. “Opening up while also taking on extra expenses to keep customers and staff safe was costly in many ways. My team and I applaud those entrepreneurs for supporting their communities and are proud to deliver the support needed to help them reach sustainable revenues and grow.”

Eligibility, Application, and Awards

To qualify for the B2B NewBiz program, businesses must have launched between January 2020 and December 2021 and be in an industry that was particularly impacted by the pandemic (As outlined [here](#)), or a business that was started by an individual or individuals that became unemployed during the pandemic. Eligible funding amounts are based on when the business was established and whether the business is home-based or operating out of a “brick-and-mortar” establishment:

Business Start Date	Brick-and-Mortar	Home-based
January to June, 2020	\$30,000	\$10,000
July to December, 2020	\$20,000	\$5,000
January to December, 2021	\$10,000	N/A

“Illinois’ small business community proved its resiliency during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the state of Illinois is committed to supporting entrepreneurs and businesses through their continued post-pandemic recovery efforts,” **said Senate Assistant Majority Leader Dave Koehler (D-Peoria)**. “Through a variety of resources and programs such as B2B NewBiz, the state is spurring a positive business climate in every corner of Illinois.”

“Small businesses are the soul of Illinois, and through hard work and dedication the last few years, new small business owners contributed to Illinois’ growing economy,” **said Rep. Janet**

Yang Rohr (D-Naperville). “The State of Illinois’ B2B NewBiz program is putting small business owners first and showing them why Illinois is the best place to do business.”

“Existing business owners and entrepreneurs weren’t the only ones who suffered during the pandemic – new business owners setting up shop across Illinois faced an uphill battle yet persevered,” **said Rep. Kimberly DuBuclet (D-Chicago).** “The B2B NewBiz program is supporting Illinois’ resilient small business community while bolstering the economy through continued job creation.”

In addition to webinars that will be hosted by navigators, DCEO will be hosting statewide English-and Spanish-language webinars.

Statewide DCEO English-Language Webinars

- **Tuesday, November 21, 2023, 1:30 pm**
 - **Register here:**
<https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/r3f8f8257771bcc61a37be9ff41e7cd76>
- **Monday, November 27, 2023, 1:00 pm**
 - **Register here:**
<https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/rc60baebe01dc2a563260207bde74984e>

Statewide DCEO Spanish Webinar

- **miércoles, 29 de noviembre de 2023, 11:00 am**
 - **Registrar aquí:**
<https://illinois.webex.com/weblink/register/r2a33a68345396c4d325eb8b259f19a61>

Since the onset of the pandemic, DCEO has allocated \$1.5 billion in pandemic-related support for businesses, including \$693 million through B2B and BIG, \$899 million in Child Care Restoration Grants (administered in partnership with DHS), \$18.5 million in local CURE funding specifically allocated to businesses, \$14 million in Emergency Hospitality Grants, and \$3.5 million in BIG agriculture grants.

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