



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity
JB Pritzker, Governor

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State of Illinois Celebrates Record-Breaking Export Sales for 2023 and Launches Governor's Export Awards Application

CHICAGO –Today, Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) announced another record-breaking year with export sales over \$78.7 billion in 2023. According to rankings by the [U.S. Department of Commerce](#), Illinois continues to lead the Midwest as the top exporting state and fifth in the nation.

“Illinois is once again recognized as a leader in global exports,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “As the fifth largest exporting state in the nation, our \$78.7 billion in international sales support countless jobs across the state – a sign of a thriving economy. I’m also thankful to the broad array of industries who contributed to this milestone. Their robust selection of goods and services signal to the world that a trade partnership with Illinois is good for business.”

Illinois is a leading global gateway, with its convenient geographic location and proximity to airports, railways and shipping ports helping companies move their products to over 200 countries around the world. Since 2019, Illinois exports have increased by 32%. Mexico, Illinois’ second top export market, was the single greatest contributor to growth, with export sales exceeding 12% growth since 2022 and 39% since 2019. Top export markets include Canada, Mexico, Germany, China and Australia.

“The State of Illinois continues to grow as a global economic powerhouse with record-breaking export sales,” **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards**. “Through resources provided by DCEO’s Office of Trade and Investment, Illinois businesses can access opportunities to help them succeed at home and across the globe.”

Governor's Export Awards

To honor Illinois businesses that contributed to this success, DCEO's Office of Trade and Investment (OTI) is accepting applications for the Governor's 2024 Export Awards from June 1 through August 31. Illinois companies that achieved excellence in exporting and organizations that provided outstanding export assistance to Illinois businesses are encouraged to [apply](#).

Illinois State Trade and Export Promotion (ISTEP) Program

DCEO helps to identify international business development opportunities and assist companies in starting

or expanding their international sales pipeline. Eligible Illinois exporters may apply for up to \$25,000 annually through OTI's Illinois State Trade and Export Promotion (ISTEP) program to help fund international expansion initiatives, including exhibiting in foreign trade shows and marketing products to international buyers.

Trade events are designed to help Illinois companies increase international sales through resources offered by DCEO and funded through the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA). Illinois companies are encouraged to apply for ISTEP dollars to help offset the costs of participating in an international trade exhibit hosted by the State and its international partners. ISTEP supports small companies by providing resources for market intelligence, access to foreign markets through trade missions, trade show participation, product compliance, website localization and e-commerce, export training, and more.

Applications for the competitive ISTEP program are accepted throughout the year and considered on a rolling basis. To submit an application or to learn more about export assistance available through OTI and through any one of the six statewide SBDC International Trade Centers, please visit [DCEO's website](#).

To participate in future trade shows, including those listed below, please visit [DCEO's website](#).

- Multisector Trade Mission to Mexico | Mexico City, Mexico | July 14-20, 2024
- Farnborough International Airshow | Farnborough, UK | July 22-26, 2024
- Africa Health | Johannesburg, South Africa | October 17-25, 2024
- MEDICA Trade Fair | Dusseldorf, Germany | November 11-14, 2024

DCEO has a global network including posts in six key strategic locations around the globe to provide Illinois companies an advantage toward international success. For more information about resources available through the State of Illinois and DCEO's Office of Trade and Investment, please visit exports.illinois.gov or fdi.illinois.gov.

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