

# Small Illinois Cities Can Now Apply For Share Of \$742 Million In Federal Funds

by Greg Bishop  
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SPRINGFIELD – Smaller cities across Illinois can now apply for their share of \$742 million in federal taxpayer COVID-19 relief funds the Congress approved earlier this year.

Cities with populations larger than 50,000 already received the first allotment of their share of \$2.7 billion directly from the federal government. Chicago is getting most of that.

The Illinois Municipal League notified smaller cities they can now apply through the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

IML Executive Director Brad Cole said it's important for cities to act fast.

"They have to go online through the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, complete all the state-required bureaucratic steps that are necessary to get the funding and wait for the state to release the funds," Cole said. "They have to have all of that done by Sept. 30."

The funds are meant for certain things, like sewers, broadband or COVID-19-related expenses and other uses.

"Use the money for short-term economic stimulus that's going to result in long-term benefit for their community," Cole said.

IDES said in an information document the state would also distribute any unclaimed funds to other smaller cities.

Cole said it's not clear how that would be calculated.

"But we don't want to have that question to answer because we want every community to complete their request, get it submitted by Sept. 30, receive the funds as the Congress and the president enacted and intended and put those dollars to use in their communities to help them recover from this pandemic," Cole said.

A list of how much money cities are in line for can be found at the DCEO website.

The first round of payments is expected to go out in the first 10 business days of October, according to the DCEO. Reports from the cities to the U.S. Treasury about their spending must be made by the end of October, with subsequent reports throughout the next several years.

"Approximately 12 months after the first tranche of funding is disbursed, the State will disburse the second tranche of NEU funding," the agency said. "These payments will go to the same NEUs that received first tranche payments. Per Treasury guidelines, there will be no opportunity for the State to amend the list of NEUs eligible for the second tranche payments."

The money is part of the overall \$160 billion in federal taxpayer funds set aside for Illinois since the beginning of the pandemic.