

Pritzker Administration Announces Prime Sites Capital Program To Boost Investment And Job Creation In Illinois

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CHICAGO—Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced a new program designed to attract investment to Illinois from companies that will create well-paying jobs and expand the state’s foothold in high-growth industries. The Prime Sites program is a highly competitive capital grant opportunity for companies proposing large-scale development projects that will create at least 50 well-paying jobs for Illinois residents.

This program will expand the State’s business attraction efforts, enabling an additional tool to attract companies considering expansion projects in Illinois and will help support job creation throughout Illinois. Overall, the State estimates that it will commit up to \$33 million to Prime Sites, which in turn should bring a total of more than \$165 million in capital projects to Illinois and spur the creation of at least 6,500 new jobs.

“With our skilled workforce, modern infrastructure, and unparalleled access to transportation and global markets, Illinois already is ripe for relocation, expansion, and retention of forward-thinking companies,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “Our new Prime Sites program will further invite new investments from cutting-edge companies like those in the fields of renewable energy, quantum, technology, life sciences, and many others expected to create thousands of well-paying jobs in the years ahead.”

Funded by Rebuild Illinois, DCEO will leverage the Prime Sites fund to provide matching capital for large investments by businesses relocating to or expanding in Illinois. Grants will range from \$250,000 to \$6 million and will be tied to the number of new jobs created. Recipients will be required to provide a minimum 4-to-1 match – enabling the grant to cover up to 20% of total capital costs for each project.

“The Prime Sites fund provides the State of Illinois with an additional tool to attract investment and job creation in cutting edge industries,” said DCEO Acting Director Sylvia Garcia. “As the latest installment of our Rebuild Illinois capital plan, Prime Sites will help Illinois continue to invest in infrastructure that accelerates growth in innovative industries—while also maintaining our laser focus on providing support for existing companies and building a pipeline of 21st-century careers for Illinois residents.”

To apply for a Prime Sites grant, companies must commit to creating at least 50 well-paying jobs and investing \$40 million in Illinois or creating at least 100 well-paying jobs and investing \$20 million in Illinois. Companies must also receive contingent approval through the State of Illinois that they qualify for the EDGE or High Impact Business (HIB) program, incentives provided to companies that commit to expansion or

job creation in Illinois. Priority will be given to companies that are located in an economically disadvantaged area – such as an underserved area, Opportunity Zone, or Enterprise Zone – or that are in a set of high-growth industries.

“The Prime Sites Initiative will continue Illinois’ unprecedented economic comeback by providing lucrative incentives to companies who offer high-paying jobs to our residents,” said Rep. Mike Zalewski (D-Riverside). I’m proud to have supported the historic Rebuild Illinois Capital Bill in 2019 and thank Governor Pritzker and his administration for implementing this important program.”

Companies with local letters of support as well as those with national or global reach will receive preference during the review process. All projects must adhere to State of Illinois requirements for BEP and Illinois Works. A full list of eligibility requirements can be found on DCEO’s website.

“Strong investments in capital are just another reason why companies all over the world are choosing Illinois to invest,” said State Rep. Mark Walker (D-Arlington Heights). “I am proud that the Pritzker Administration is making every effort to attract companies that are committed to growing Illinois’ communities and workers.”

Governor Pritzker’s 5-year plan for economic growth offers a blueprint for creating jobs, boosting investment in underserved communities, and leveraging growth in regional industry clusters. To be eligible for a Prime Sites grant, applicant must operate in an industry of focus from the 5-year plan: information technology; agribusiness; energy; transportation, distribution, and logistics (TD&L); and manufacturing. In addition, the Prime Sites program will prioritize applicants in specific fields which suggest rapid advancement and job creation in the years ahead, including quantum/cloud computing, pharma, and medical devices, telemedicine, robotics, artificial intelligence, automated transport, renewable energy manufacturing, robotics, and more.

DCEO will begin accepting applications for Prime Sites on September 20, 2021, and awards will be made on a rolling basis. To receive updates on this program and economic development in Illinois, visit DCEO’s website or follow us on social @IllinoisDCEO.