



Illinois Back 2 Business Grant Program Makes Final Push to Small Businesses

by Megan Weiser

October 13 2021 11:48 AM





EDWARDSVILLE – Area legislators and local community navigators primed with support and resources for small businesses promoted the Illinois Back 2 Business (BSB)

Grant Program during a press conference held at Southern Illinois University Edwardsville on Tuesday, Oct. 12.

The B2B Grant Program is a key component of Governor JB Pritzker's \$1.5 billion economic package designed to maximize the impact of American Rescue Plan Act funds provided to Illinois. The B2B application portal closes at 11:59 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 13.





“We are encouraging all businesses in the Metro East, in the hardest hit areas, who have seen losses in revenue, maybe struggle with access to broadband and need those wraparound services, to apply,” said Jonathan McGee, deputy director of regional economic development for the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.

“This grant program is vitally important,” added Rep. Katie Stuart (D-Edwardsville). “If your business can benefit, it’s not too late to apply. We have resources to help you. We want to distribute these funds.”

As part of the program, Illinois Small Business Development Center (SBDC) at SIUE Director Jo Ann Di Maggio May is among a group of Community Navigators who are providing one-on-one guidance and technical assistance.

The Small Business Community Navigators Program is a support program for small businesses in the State of Illinois targeting businesses who are identified as underserved including minority, rural, veteran and women-owned businesses.

“Underserved businesses may find resources difficult to access, or simply be unaware of services and resources available,” Di Maggio May said. “As Navigators, we can help alleviate these issues and reduce the barriers underserved businesses often face when trying to access relief program dollars.”

“Importantly, beyond the B2B Grant Program,” she added, “there is assistance that Navigators can offer to help businesses survive and thrive during this economic recovery.”

The Illinois SBDC for the Metro East assists start-up ventures, as well as existing businesses headquartered in the nine-county region of Calhoun, Jersey, Madison, Bond, Clinton, St. Clair, Washington, Monroe and Randolph. It is funded in part through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, and SIUE as a service to Illinois small businesses.

By aiding entrepreneurs and companies in defining their path to success, the SBDC network positively impacts the Metro East by strengthening the business community, creating and retaining new jobs and encouraging new investment. It enhances the region's economic interests by providing one-stop assistance to individuals by means of counseling, training, research and advocacy for new ventures and existing small businesses. When appropriate, the SBDC strives to affiliate its ties to the region to support the goals and objectives of both the SIUE School of Business and the University at large.

To learn about the SBDC, contact the IL SBDC for the Metro East at SIUE at 618-650-2929. (Front L-R) Devon Moody-Graham, National Development Council community relations coordinator, IL SBDC at SIUE Director Jo Ann Di Maggio May, Rep. Katie Stuart (D-Edwardsville), (Back L-R) Paul Ellis, City of Fairview Heights Economic Development, and Jonathan McGee, deputy director of regional economic development for the IL Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity.





[Jackie Duty also contributed to this story.](#)