

Illinois Celebrates National Women's Business Month

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CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is celebrating National Women’s Business Month throughout October by recognizing the significant contributions of women-owned businesses throughout the state. The monthlong celebration – which is designated through a [proclamation](#) – includes business [resources](#) such as virtual and in-person events, resource guides for financial and social capital, business spotlights on social media, and a social media campaign to support and elevate Illinois women-owned businesses.

“This month and every month, we’re proud to continue supporting, uplifting, and celebrating women-owned businesses throughout our great state,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “For too long, women business leaders and entrepreneurs faced systemic and financial barriers when starting and growing a business -- but here in Illinois, we’re making it possible for everyone to succeed through increased grants opportunities and access to resources.”

Although Illinois has over 456,000 women-owned businesses, women business owners and entrepreneurs, especially women of color, have historically experienced barriers in accessing financial and social capital and other key business resources. DCEO prioritizes creating an equitable business environment through targeted initiatives and resources designed for women-owned businesses.

“Women are vital to the health and future of our state's economy - not just on the sidelines, but at the helm of businesses that are enhancing our communities and building wealth that will have a ripple effect on generations to come,” **said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton**. “In Illinois, we are helping more women start and grow their businesses and make their dreams a reality. When women thrive, we all thrive.”

DCEO's Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) works to create an inclusive business environment for communities that have faced systemic challenges to growth, including women business owners and entrepreneurs, as well as businesses owned by people of color. OMEE hosts dozens of events and provides year-round support to women-owned businesses, including connection with grants, technical assistance, and incentives to bolster women entrepreneurs and women-owned enterprises.

“During Women’s Business Month and throughout the year, DCEO is dedicated to eliminating barriers to create a more equitable business environment across Illinois,” **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards**. “Women-owned businesses are historically underinvested and have limited financial capital opportunities, but DCEO continues to support women-owned businesses through millions of dollars in grants while providing a variety of resources, support, and funding opportunities to women entrepreneurs.”

Women's Business Month Events

This series of virtual and in-person events and business resources will provide women with knowledge to increase their access to resources and opportunities. All events are free to attend; additional information and registration can be found below and on the [DCEO website](#).