

Pritzker Administration Announces Small Business Grant Awards for B2B Restaurants, Hotels and Arts

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CHICAGO – The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced the conclusion of the Back to Business (B2B) Restaurants, Hotels and Arts program with \$156 million provided in relief funds. Through these three programs, nearly 4,000 grants went to businesses in over 500 cities, towns and localities in 95 counties across the state. A list of Illinois B2B grantees can be found [here](#).

“Illinois’ small business are the backbone of our economy and a cornerstone of our pandemic recovery,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “Since day one, my administration has been committed to supporting every business in our state—ensuring that every business owner and entrepreneur has the opportunity to succeed. Across the state, the Back to Business program kept thousands of restaurants, hotels, and arts organizations open, protected thousands of jobs, and kept our communities thriving.”

“The Back to Business grants are a bridge for continued economic success as the hospitality and arts sectors recover from the COVID-19 pandemic,” **said Lt. Gov. Juliana Stratton**. “Restaurants, hotels, and the arts enliven our state's economy. I'm thrilled this much-needed relief supports our hospitality businesses and the arts in our communities.”

B2B Arts and B2B Restaurants grant award amounts were determined based on a percentage of revenue declines, and funding for the B2B Hotels awards was allocated based on the number of rooms. Grants had an average award amount of \$39,484, with different ranges of funding available depending on the business type. The grant program utilized American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and was designed to offset losses and support job retention in the industries hardest-hit by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The Back to Business program has been a lifeline for thousands of Illinois businesses in recent years, and the latest round of grants will help keep the doors open for restaurants, hotels, and arts organizations in every corner of the state,” **said DCEO Director Kristin Richards**. “Supporting employers and the state’s world-class workforce is a top priority for DCEO, and the B2B program is providing much-needed assistance to businesses while bolstering the economy.”

In order to reach hardest-hit populations, DCEO enlisted a robust network of approximately 100 community navigators to conduct outreach and provide technical assistance in communities across the state, as well as industry-specific navigators for Restaurants, Hotels and Arts, as well as additional support from other industry partners.

“It was so inspiring to see our statewide arts community work together to ensure this \$50 million landed in the hands of organizations, businesses, and creative workers who suffered such loss through the pandemic,” **says Claire Rice, Executive Director of Arts Alliance Illinois**. “Despite ongoing challenges, our creative community continues to make vital contributions to our economy and our wellbeing, and this program offered invaluable assistance at a time when it is greatly needed. We thank the State of Illinois for dedicating this funding to arts and culture and our creative community for coming together around this opportunity. We hope the State builds on the momentum of this historic moment and continues to show its commitment to supporting the arts in Illinois.”

"We are grateful to Governor Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) for their continued support of the restaurant industry. These grants are crucial to the state's small business community, and offer a lifeline to those still recovering from the past few years." – **Sam Toia, President and CEO of Illinois Restaurant Association.**

"The funding from these grants have gone a long way in supporting Illinois hotels' ongoing recovery from the pandemic and have allowed them to rehire workers quicker, as our occupancy numbers rise closer to pre-pandemic levels. With the help of the B2B Hotel grants, we look forward to regaining our position as a key economic engine and top employer in the state. I want to thank Governor Pritzker and DCEO for their efforts to support the state's tourism industry as we continue to welcome more visitors back to Illinois." – **Michael Jacobson, President & CEO of the Illinois Hotel & Lodging Association**

"This substantial amount of funds infused into the Arts and Culture sector recognizes the immense value the arts bring to our communities. It is a resounding affirmation that the state of Illinois supports the creative economy as we have had significant losses these past couple of year. This support will unleash stability and a wave of innovation and artistic expression that will enrich our lives and propel our society forward. Let us embrace this moment with enthusiasm and gratitude to Governor Pritzker, the Legislature, and our wonderful partners at the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity." – **Nora Daley, Board Chair of the Illinois Arts Council**

Data on Grant Distribution:

- A total of 3,951 businesses were provided grant awards, including:
 - **Hotels:** 720
 - **Restaurants:** 996
 - **Arts:** 2,235
- Businesses received an average grant amount of \$39,484 with the following median awards amounts broken out by sector:
 - **Hotels:** \$62,458
 - **Restaurants:** \$50,000
 - **Arts:** \$5,000
- 85 percent of recipients did not receive any prior B2B or Business Interruption Grant (BIG) relief
- Average Revenue declines between 2019-2020:
 - **Hotels:** As outlined in statute, revenue decline was not a factor for evaluating hotel awards.
 - **Restaurants:** 28 percent
 - **Arts:** 44 percent

- Funding Distributed Per Industry:
 - **Hotels:** \$70.4 million
 - **Restaurants:** \$37.9 million
 - **Arts:** \$47.7 million

Through the pandemic, the Pritzker administration has focused on providing assistance to Illinois' hardest-hit businesses and communities totaling more than \$1.5 billion through DCEO programs. Through B2B and BIG programs alone, Illinois has distributed 19,500 awards to businesses totaling nearly \$700 million.