

# Gov. Pritzker Announces \$5 Million Available In B2B Grants For Local Chambers

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CHICAGO – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced \$5 million in available [grant funding](#) through the Back to Business (B2B) Local Chambers program. Following state recovery programming for businesses totaling \$1.5 billion, the latest American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA)-funded opportunity is designed to provide additional support for local

chambers of commerce that experienced negative economic impacts from the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Local chambers of commerce support the small business infrastructure that makes so many Illinois communities great—but like everyone in the small business space, they were hit hard by the effects of the pandemic,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “These grant awards will support entrepreneurs who took a risk to establish a business in uncertain times and deserve a fair shot at contributing to our growing economic recovery.”

Local chambers of commerce play a vital role in supporting businesses in communities across Illinois. The B2B Local Chambers funding can be used by chambers to market and develop localities, provide small businesses with professional development, and more to support small businesses and entrepreneurs while bolstering economic development. Applicants are encouraged to visit the [DCEO website](#) to learn more and apply.

“By providing resources to local chambers of commerce, we are ensuring that small businesses can succeed in all corners of Illinois. The \$5million in B2B grants will directly impact the entrepreneurs and business owners in communities disproportionately impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “Local chambers of commerce are essential to a thriving economy, and these funds will further our collective recovery.”

As outlined in [statute](#), B2B Local Chambers (20 ILCS 605/605-1105) grant award amounts will be determined by total annual revenue declines between 2019 and 2020, as reflected on tax returns. [Applications are open](#) from January 11 through February 15, 2024, and awards are expected to be made several weeks after the deadline date. All eligible applicants will receive a grant as long as the chamber of commerce meets eligibility requirements and submits proper documentation and attestations.

“The State of Illinois has made vast strides in recovering from the severe economic impacts of the pandemic,” said DCEO Director Kristin Richards. “This B2B funding plays an essential role in helping local chambers of commerce provide financial support and other resources to communities impacted by the pandemic.”

Eligible chambers of commerce include organizations of businesses and professionals dedicated to improving the economic climate and business development of the community in which they are located that experienced a negative economic impact from the COVID-19 pandemic. Eligible chambers will have an annual revenue of \$1 million or less.

“The B2B Local Chambers program is a prime example of our continued commitment to stimulating growth within our state’s economy,” said House Speaker Emanuel “Chris” Welch (D-Hillside). “I was proud to be a sponsor of the original legislation for these grants because we know that when we make investing in our local economy a priority, all businesses across Illinois have the opportunity to thrive.”

“We know that many businesses across the state have been historically disadvantaged when it comes to economic investments, but the State of Illinois is making tremendous strides in investing in the communities that need it the most,” said Sen. Majority Caucus Appropriations Leader Elgie R. Sims, Jr. (D-Chicago). “This funding is critical in ensuring businesses and chambers of commerce, no matter where they are in the state, have the economic resources they need to be successful.”

Qualified entities can apply for grants up to \$50,000, to be determined by 1/6 of the annual revenue lost between 2019 and 2020. Applications will be accepted until 5:00 p.m. February 15, 2024. To help applicants prepare to apply for funding, DCEO is offering live Help Desk support to walk through each step of the application at [chambers@a4cb.org](mailto:chambers@a4cb.org) and 312-275-3000. Interested parties are encouraged to reach out to [CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov](mailto:CEO.GrantHelp@illinois.gov) for application assistance.

“In Illinois, small and medium Main Street businesses are critical for our economy and should be a major focus for growth,” said Rep. Mark Walker (D-Arlington Heights). “It’s not all about the big guys. Local Chambers of Commerce are important allies in our continuing work revitalizing our economy to make Illinois a great place for all.”

“Our local economies will have additional opportunities and financial resources that are needed for us to be successful, thanks to the funding provided by B2B Local Chambers,” said Sen. Ann Gillespie (D-Arlington Heights). “These investments will have a long-lasting impact on the growth of our state’s local economies.”

To provide support with application review, technical portal support for applicants, manage the development of the application portal and provide support in process payments, DCEO has enlisted Allies for Community Business (A4CB) to serve as the program administrator. A4CB focuses on serving Black, Latinx and low-income entrepreneurs in Illinois through their nonprofit work to provide the capital, coaching and connections that entrepreneurs need to grow businesses that create jobs and wealth in their communities.

“Chambers of commerce provide important services to small businesses and local communities. They connect local businesses with customers and foster the type of collaboration that facilitates the success of small businesses,” said Elliot Richardson,

President, and Co-Founder of the Small Business Advocacy Council (SBAC). “While chambers were deeply impacted by the pandemic, their dedicated staffs and volunteers continued working tirelessly to see businesses through that difficult time. We are grateful for the launch of this program because it will support the chambers which support small businesses.”

Since the onset of the pandemic, DCEO has allocated \$1.5 billion in pandemic-related support for businesses, including \$693 million through B2B and BIG, \$899 million in Childcare Restoration Grants (administered in partnership with DHS), \$18.5 million in local CURE funding specifically allocated to businesses, \$14 million in Emergency Hospitality Grants, and \$3.5 million in BIG agriculture grants.