

Governor Pritzker Announces \$3 Million Innovation Voucher Program

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CHICAGO – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) today announced \$3 million in available [grant funding](#) through the Innovation Voucher Program. Innovation Vouchers will provide grants for companies to engage in research projects in partnership with a qualified Illinois institute of higher education, ultimately leading to the commercialization of new Illinois-based products and stimulating economic growth in the state. Grantees will be selected through a competitive application process.

“In Illinois, we’re propelling our economy forward by funding innovative research and development projects, said Governor JB Pritzker. “Thanks to this program, private companies have a new incentive to partner with our public universities and transform their groundbreaking ideas into tangible products and services.”

This program aims to promote research and development partnerships between small- and mid-sized businesses and Illinois’ world-class higher education institutions, leveraging research capabilities, facilities, and expertise to drive innovation that propels business forward. From cutting-edge labs, equipment, and valuable access to leading researchers, higher education institutions across the state are primed to help companies create innovative new products and services to boost competitiveness.

“Hard work and exciting ideas are essential to moving innovation forward, but that creativity also needs financial support to turn ideas into reality,” said Lt. Governor Juliana Stratton. “Illinois is already a world-class leader in business, innovation, and technology, and the Innovation Voucher program will take our state even further.”

Innovation Vouchers are designed to support with research engagement costs, including the sharing of technologies, knowledge, facilities, equipment necessary for project needs, and more.

“Illinois continues to strengthen its position as a global leader in innovation by launching the new Innovation Vouchers program to support research and development throughout the state,” said DCEO Director Kristin Richards. “By lowering barriers to entry and facilitating collaboration between industry and academia, this grant program will accelerate the commercialization of cutting-edge technologies and drive job creation across Illinois.”

Eligible entities include businesses with fewer than 500 employees that are Illinois-based or have at least 100 full-time employees in Illinois that operate in key industries, including agribusiness and agriculture technology, energy, information technology, life sciences and health care, manufacturing, and transportation and logistics. Eligible research and development projects will lead to the creation of new products and services throughout Illinois.

In order to manage a high volume of applications in a timely manner, DCEO has enlisted a program administrator – Illinois Science and Technology Coalition (ISTC) – to support with application review, provide technical portal support for applicants, manage the development of the application portal and provide support in processing payments.

“Empowering innovation is the foundation of ISTC's mission, and we have proudly served the great state of Illinois as a connector, convener and champion for research and technology based economic development. With the Illinois Innovation Voucher Program, we're excited to collaborate with DCEO in supporting the power of partnerships for SMEs across our state. We are not only facilitating success, but igniting an economic partnership movement,” said Colleen D. Egan, President and CEO of ISTC.

Qualified entities can apply for competitive grants, with awards up to \$75,000, to cover up to 75% of research engagement costs. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until funds are exhausted.

To view application information and apply for the grant, please visit the program [website](#).