



WHITESIDE COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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For Immediate Release

For additional information, please contact:

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Small Business Assistance Available

County spreading the word about ComED Small Business Assistance Program and DCEO BIG Grant

Morrison, IL (December 11, 2020) - ComEd and Whiteside County are teaming to introduce ComEd's Small Business Customer Assistance Program to area businesses. The County and ComEd understand that COVID-19 continues to create economic hardship for many of the region's business customers, and to assist in this time of need, ComEd created a new program to help small businesses.

As of December 16, 2020, ComED is accepting applications for assistance that would be applied to a business' bill in 2021 if they meet all qualifications.

The Small Business Assistance Program provides eligible small business customers, with a one-time grant up to \$2,000 towards a past due balance. Eligible customers may also place a remaining balance into a payment plan of up to six months. To apply for the Small Business Assistance Program, interested businesses should call [1-877-426-6331](tel:1-877-426-6331)

More information about ComEd's Small Business Assistance Program can be found at: <https://www.comed.com/MyAccount/CustomerSupport/Pages/SmallBusinessAssistanceProgram.aspx>

Gary Camarano, Whiteside County Economic Development Director, said, "We want to alert all our small businesses to any assistance that they might be eligible for during these trying times. COVID-19 has affected all of us, and small businesses are really feeling the effect. If this can help, let's get the word out, and apply for the assistance."

Camarano added, "It has been reported that 800 small businesses are closing every day. Maybe this program can be part of the assistance that helps a business stay afloat."

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Additionally, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) is informing small businesses and communities that the application period for the Business Interruption Grant (BIG) program will close at 5pm on Tuesday, December 15.

DCEO and its grant administration and outreach partners are reminding small business owners to get their application in if they haven't already. Applying is easy, and DCEO along with its grant administrators Accion and WBDC have developed a menu of resources and technical assistance to help small businesses in need qualify for grants. Resources and more info are available at the program's website:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/SmallBizAssistance/Pages/C19DisadvantagedBusGrants.aspx>

DCEO has received over 40,000 applications through the program since it launched in June. Since that time, the department has issued \$168 million to over 6,300 small business owners spanning over 500 cities around the state with more awards going out in the coming days.

The State of Illinois anticipates that it will award the remainder of the \$270 million in funds through this program in the coming weeks. DCEO will continue to follow the funding priorities outlined under the program including reaching heavily impacted industries, businesses located in a disproportionately impacted areas (DIAs) and downstate communities, and small businesses with annual revenues of \$5 million or less and/or businesses that have not received other forms of emergency assistance like PPP.

BIG was created by Governor Pritzker and the General Assembly in response to the unprecedented burdens COVID-19 has placed on small businesses around the state. BIG grants, leveraging federal CARES Act dollars, provide grants tailored to business losses, with amounts ranging between \$5,000-\$150,000. The average grant provided to date is \$25,000. Grant funds may be used toward operational expenses, including PPE, rent and utilities, payroll, and more.

For more information on BIG eligibility, how to receive assistance with submitting your application, and to review the application, please visit DCEO's program website listed above.