

COVID-19 Update: June 10

Reminders: All previous bulletins and other resources listed at www.gpcovid.com. Send any questions to bizinfo@greaterpeoriaedc.org.

DEADLINE APPROACHING: Downstate Stabilization Grant Applications Due June 10

Small businesses in Peoria, Tazewell, Woodford, Mason and Logan counties can apply for a grant of up to \$25,000 from the State of Illinois. Businesses with between 1 and 50 employees who were either (1) forced to shut down in April with no ability to work remotely or (2) were a bar/restaurant limited to carryout only can receive the grant to cover up to two months of the cost of working capital like payroll and rent. Businesses that have been able to recently reopen are eligible to apply. (The key is the status in April.) Businesses located in the cities of Peoria and Pekin are not eligible for this program due to federal funding rules. Other restrictions apply. Applications must be submitted by 5 pm on Wednesday, June 10. More information and the application can be found at www.gpcovid.com.

Paycheck Protection Program Changes Bill Signed

On June 5, President Trump signed a bill that provided more flexibility to businesses who participated in the Paycheck Protection Program. Among the important changes are the extension of the loan forgiveness period to include costs incurred over 24 weeks vs. 8; reduces the amount that needed to be paid toward payroll from 75% to 60%; and extends the deadline to apply for a PPP loan until Dec. 31, 2020. There is still over \$100 billion available in the program. Companies that passed on the lending program originally because of certain rules should review their options again.

Business Response Tool Launched

Greater Peoria Economic Development Council and [Tada Cognitive Solutions](#) announced the launch of the Business Recovery Program. In partnership with regional Chambers of Commerce and regional economic development professionals, the Program creates a coordinated case management system to support local businesses meet their most pressing needs as they begin to reopen. Businesses enter the portal and answer a set of questions about their business and challenges they face, from workforce to finances. All data remains confidential. Businesses are then connected to a local economic development “case manager” who can connect the business with a suite of resources and technical assistance tailored to their needs. More information available [here](#).

Workers' Compensation & Unemployment Changes Signed into Law

Last Friday Gov. Pritzker signed legislation regarding changes to the workers' compensation regarding COVID-19 claims as [Public Act 101-633](#). From a summary created by the [Illinois Manufacturers Association](#), the law and legislative intent includes the following provisions:

1. All essential workers can receive the rebuttable presumption.
2. Employers can use the lowest standard (ordinary presumption) to rebut the rebuttable presumption. An employer simply has to show that they were following CDC or IDPH guidance and practices.
3. The employer's experience modification will not change due to COVID.
4. A home or residence is not the workplace.
5. The presumption ends December 31, 2020.
6. Employers receive a TTD offset for employees that were on paid leave or extended FMLA.
7. The employee has to have been exposed and contracted the virus. Simple exposure does not qualify.

8. Before June 15, an employee has to have a positive diagnosis or medical test; on or after June 16, a positive test is required.

Unemployment Insurance

The same Public Law as above clarified some issues surrounding unemployment. Again from an [IMA](#) summary, P.A. 101-633 includes the following important provision for business: “Employers will not be charged [by increases to their unemployment insurance] for layoffs between March 15, 2020, and December 31, 2020. These costs will be socialized in the system.”

Workforce Recovery Initiative

The State of Illinois has launched a free online career training geared toward helping Illinoisans who have lost their jobs due to the economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Through a partnership with online learning platform Coursera, Illinois residents have the opportunity to enroll in free virtual training courses to provide training and credentialing that will help ready dislocated workers for jobs in Information Technology and other marketable fields. Registration for the Coursera [Workforce Recovery Initiative](#) will be made available to Illinois residents from now through September, and all courses must be completed by December 31, 2020. Upon completion of the program, participants may earn an industry-recognized credential as well as information about continuing building upon their new skills through continued education at their local community college.

Bradley SBDC Hosting Webinar on Business Resilience

Bradley’s Small Business Development Center is hosting a web conversation with Sara O’Shea, Owner of So Chic Boutique located in Peoria Heights and Morton Illinois. Sara will share how she has guided her small businesses and employees through the challenging economic environment during the COVID-19 Pandemic. She will discuss how she has turned obstacles into opportunities. The event is Wednesday, June 17 from noon - 1 p.m. The event is free but participants must register [here](#).

Civil Unrest Impact and SBA Loans

From Illinois DCEO: The civil unrest and events of recent days have placed enormous stress and grief on all of our communities across the country and in Illinois - with many of our businesses facing extensive damage where looting may have occurred. This arrives as our state faces the unprecedented challenges brought on by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. To help businesses who are facing these damages, DCEO is working with the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) who can provide targeted, low-interest loans to small businesses and nonprofits that have been severely impacted by civil unrest in counties who have received a disaster declaration through SBA.

To obtain these special business loans for businesses in our communities, SBA must first issue a disaster declaration. **For counties to qualify**, businesses must first document their damages from the protests and looting and share this information with SBA. To streamline this process, DCEO has created a form to assist businesses with reporting. This information will then be used to submit for a disaster declaration from SBA for impacted counties. **Please note:** The form is **not an application for funding** and **information obtained will not be used for or against businesses** should they decide to later submit an application for a loan through SBA. If your business was impacted by civil unrest in the past few weeks, please complete this [form](#).