

COVID-19 Update: August 28, 2021

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

Applications for Back To Business Grants Now Being Accepted

The state of Illinois has launched and is now accepting applications for its [Back to Business](#) grant. The program is designed to help small businesses who suffered revenue losses between 2019 and 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A total of \$250 million in grants are available, ranging from \$5,000 to \$150,000 per business. The eligibility for the program is very broad and most businesses with \$20 million or less in annual revenue are qualified. The program also has set asides and priorities for certain hard hit business types like restaurants and hotels, smaller businesses (under \$5 million in revenue), businesses in low-income zip codes, and businesses who were not helped by other programs like Paycheck Protection Program and Business Interruption Grant. The last day for applications will be October 11. There is lots more information [here](#) including the [eligibility rules](#) (in Spanish [here](#)) and an [FAQ](#) (Spanish version [here](#)).

Local Community Navigators Can Help with Back to Business Grants

Greater Peoria EDC has developed a network of Community Navigators in our region. Navigators are local nonprofit organizations trained to help businesses understand the rules of the Back to Business grant and help with the application process. Businesses in need of assistance applying for this grant, from asking questions about eligibility to help with the application portal, can fill out a brief form [here](#) and be connected to the Community Navigator in their community.

State of Illinois Mask Mandate

Governor Pritzker has reinstated a new [mask mandate](#) commencing on Monday, August 30, 2021. Masks will be required in all indoor public places for all persons aged 2 years or older regardless of vaccination status.

Here are some basic details:

- Applicable to all indoor public places which are generally publicly-facing businesses like restaurants, bars, and gyms. Manufacturers and office buildings are not generally considered public places.
- The Executive Order allows a person to remove a face covering temporarily while actively eating or drinking and may be removed at workplaces when they can consistently maintain six feet of distance (such as when workers are in their office or cubicle space)
- All individuals are required to wear a mask regardless of vaccination status.
- Masks remain mandatory on public transportation, health care settings, schools, and in congregate settings.
- While masks are not required outdoors, masks are strongly encouraged to be worn in crowded outdoor settings or for activities that require close contact.
- There is no enforcement mechanism included in the Executive Order.

PPP Forgiveness

The SBA is launching a streamlined application portal to allow borrowers with [Paycheck Protection Program \(PPP\)](#) loans of \$150,000 or less through participating lenders to apply for forgiveness directly through the SBA. The new forgiveness platform began accepting applications from borrowers on August

4th, 2021. Borrowers that need assistance or have questions should call (877) 552-2692, Monday – Friday, 7 a.m. - 7 p.m. CST. More information [here](#). Borrowers should check with the financial institution from which they received the loan to determine the best forgiveness method to choose.

COVID-19 Vaccine Availability

Vaccines are widely available through county public health departments and through private providers. [Peoria City County Health Department](#) has all three vaccines available without an appointment Monday-Friday from 9 am to 4 pm. The [Tazewell County Health Department](#) also has all three vaccines available with no appointment during certain times (check [website](#) for details). [Woodford County Health Department](#) is scheduling appointments as well as organizing walk-in, no appointment necessary clinics. Information on vaccine clinics organized by other county health departments can be found on their websites: [Logan](#), [Mason](#) (Facebook), [Fulton](#), [OSF Healthcare](#) and [UnityPoint Health](#) are also offering vaccines, including the Pfizer vaccine for 16 and 17 year olds. You can also schedule a vaccine through Heartland Health Services by calling (309) 680-7600. Finally, you can also find and schedule appointments at private pharmacies (anywhere in the US) using the [Vaccine Spotter website](#).