TAMMY DUCKWORTH
U.S. SENATOR FOR ILLINOIS

Federal & State Grant Funding Opportunities
Available Through
September 2026

Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Infrastructure Programs closing at the end of September!

On July 26, the Federal Transit Administration (FTA) announced the opportunity to apply for approximately $21 million in competitive grants for the fiscal year (FY) 2026 Grants for Buses and Bus Facilities Program (Bus Program) under Federal Assistance Listing Number 20.526 and approximately $589 million in competitive grants for the FY 2026 Low or No Emission Grant Program (Low-No Program) under Federal Assistance Listing Number 20.526.

- This is an announcement for the FY 2026 round of these programs.
- FTA is publishing a joint NOFO because these two programs have overlapping eligibilities and must be implemented on the same timeline (49 U.S.C. 5339).
- As required by Federal public transportation law:
    - Bus Program funds will be awarded competitively to purchase, rehabilitate, or lease buses and related equipment, and to construct, purchase, rehabilitate, or lease bus-related facilities.
    - Low-No Program funds will be awarded competitively for the purchase or lease of buses that use low- or no-emission propulsion technologies, including related equipment or facilities.
    - Any zero-emission project or components of a zero-emission project must use 5 percent of Federal funds for workforce development, unless the applicant certifies less or no funding is needed for this purpose.
    - Per statute, FTA will make selections for these programs within 75 days of the application due date.
    - If more funding becomes available before projects are selected, FTA may award it under this NOFO.
    - To the extent permitted by law, FTA may consider applications that are not selected for award for future funding under the Bus Program or Low-No Program.

Eligible Activities

Bus Program

Eligible activities include capital projects to purchase, lease, or rehabilitate transit buses and related equipment; and acquire, construct, lease, or rehabilitate bus-related facilities.

Low-No Program

Eligible activities include capital projects to purchase or lease zero-emission or low-emission transit buses; and acquire, construct, rehabilitate, and lease required supporting facilities such as recharging, refueling, and maintenance facilities.

Project proposals must be submitted through Grants.gov by **11:59 p.m. Eastern time on September 21, 2026.**

Education & Labor

Announcement of Stand Down Grants

The U.S. Department of Labor's (DOL) Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) supports local Stand Down events that assist veterans experiencing homelessness by providing a wide range of employment, social, and health services. Stand Down is a military term referring to an opportunity to achieve a brief respite from combat. Troops assemble in a base camp to receive new clothing, hot food, support services, and a relative degree of safety before returning to combat action. A DOL VETS-funded Stand Down event serves a similar purpose; however, it is intended for veterans experiencing or at-risk of homelessness. The critical services provided at these events are often the catalyst that enables those individuals to reenter the workforce.

Deadline: September 30, 2026

Agriculture, Water, Environment & Energy

Wetland Mitigation Banking Program Fiscal Year (FY) 2026

NRCS is announcing the availability of $3 million in WMBP grant funds for the development and establishment of mitigation banks and banking opportunities solely for agricultural producers with wetlands subject to the wetland conservation compliance provisions of the Food Security Act of 1985 (as amended). WMBP is a competitive grants program accepting proposals from eligible entities as identified in Section B.1. Priority will be given to banks in states with significant numbers of individual wetlands, wetland acres, and conservation compliance requests. Based on NRCS data, these states are Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Nebraska, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Dakota, and Wisconsin.

Deadline: September 8, 2026

Forest Legacy Program - FY2028 Funding

The Forest Legacy Program is a competitive grant program that is administered by the Forest Service in partnership with State agencies to encourage the permanent protection of privately owned forest lands through conservation easements or land purchases in support of state priorities, as described in each State Forest Action Plan.

Deadline: September 11, 2026

FY27 Brownfields Job Training (JT) Grants

Brownfields Job Training Grants fund training programs that strengthen local workforces by preparing program graduates for environmental jobs that support cleanup and revitalization efforts in their own communities. Training may include a range of brownfield-related environmental skills such as the assessment and cleanup of solid and hazardous waste; chemical risk management; stormwater management relating to site cleanup; planning and site preparation for low-impact development activities; site preparation for green infrastructure installation; and vulnerability assessment and contamination mitigation planning.

Deadline: September 23, 2026

Rural Decentralized Water System Grant Program

The DWS Grant Program has been established to help individuals with low to moderate incomes finance certain costs of household water wells and individually owned decentralized wastewater systems that they own or will own. Grants are made to eligible nonprofit organizations to establish and maintain a revolving fund to provide loans and sub-grants to eligible individuals for individually owned water well systems and/or individually owned wastewater systems.

Deadline: September 30, 2026

Community Forest and Open Space Conservation Program (CFP)

CFP is a competitive grant program that provides financial assistance to Indian Tribes, local governments, and qualified conservation non-profit organizations to establish community forests through the fee simple acquisition of private forest land.

Deadline: October 13, 2026

Transportation, HUD & Rural Development

Rural Housing Preservation Grant

The Rural Housing Service (RHS) announces a notice in funding availability under its Housing Preservation Grant (HPG) program. The HPG program is a grant program which provides qualified public agencies, private nonprofit organizations, which may include but not be limited to, Faith-Based and Community Organizations, and other eligible entities grant funds to assist very low- and low-income homeowners in repairing and rehabilitating their homes in rural areas. In addition, the HPG program assists rental property owners and cooperative housing complexes in repairing and rehabilitating their units if they agree to make such units available to low- and very low-income persons.

Deadline: September 8, 2026

Lead-Safe and Healthy Homes Financing Demonstration

This NOFO announces up to $10 million to support a National Fund Manager (NFM) to design and management of a Lead-Safe and Healthy Homes Financing Demonstration (the Fund). The Fund will be a national platform to pool public and private capital to accelerate the reduction of residential lead exposure, particularly childhood lead poisoning, and improve housing-related health conditions in low-income communities.

Deadline: September 14, 2026

Department of Justice

BJA FY 2026 Public Safety and Mental Health Initiative

This opportunity supports comprehensive service networks addressing untreated mental illness and substance use to reduce the burden of on law enforcement and the justice system; restore order in communities affected by homelessness, mental illness, and substance use; decrease recidivism; reduce crime; and improve overall public safety and restore confidence in public spaces.

Deadline: September 25, 2026

Arts & Humanities

Collaborative Research

The program supports groups of two or more scholars increasing humanistic knowledge through the preparation of a manuscript for print publication, the creation of a scholarly digital project, or the planning of an international collaboration. Projects must pursue significant research questions and lead toward an interpretive product. This year's competition is limited to projects on American history and culture or Western civilization.

Deadline: September 16, 2026

Partnership Agreement Grants, FY 2027

The National Endowment for the Arts' State & Regional Partnership Agreement grants are awarded to the nation's 56 state and jurisdictional arts agencies (SAAs), and the six regional arts organizations (RAOs) whose members comprise SAAs.

Deadline: September 29, 2026

Search Through the Federal Program Inventory!

In 2023, building upon the successful 2020 exploratory pilot effort and recommendations published in the 2021 Report to Congress, OMB launched the Federal Program Inventory, which focuses on Federal financial assistance. **Find grants and assistance opportunities that best fit your organization's needs!**

Other Helpful Resources & State Grant Opportunities

Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion Announces BEP & VBP Certification Kickstart Workshop

The Illinois Commission on Equity and Inclusion (CEI) is hosting an in-person Business Enterprise Program (BEP) and Veterans Business Program (VBP) Certification Kickstart Workshop on Wednesday, September 23, at Oakton College in Skokie. This interactive training session is designed to help small, diverse, and veteran owned businesses begin or complete the State certification process and gain access to Illinois procurement opportunities. CEI's new Certification Kickstart initiative strengthens the connection between outreach and certification outcomes, providing vendors with practical tools to navigate the application process. For this event, participants will receive step by step guidance on creating a certification profile, choosing the correct application type, uploading required documents, and completing all components of the BEP or VBP application. Certification experts will lead a live demonstration and provide real-time assistance.

Date: Wednesday, September 23, 2026
Time: 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM
Location: Oakton College Room P232, 7701 Lincoln Ave., Skokie, IL 60077
Registration is required. Interested vendors can sign up via **Certification Kickstart Workshop Registration**

New Funding Opportunity for Energy Efficiency Projects at Public Buildings Providing Local Government Services

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency announced $766,600 in funding through the Public Buildings Energy Efficiency Program for projects that include energy efficiency upgrades identified in an energy efficiency assessment or audit conducted within the last five years. The Efficient and Resilient Public Building Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is now posted.

The Public Building Energy Efficiency Program provides financial assistance for energy efficiency improvements at public buildings owned by municipalities, counties, and other units of local government. Energy efficiency is essential for reducing energy demand, conserving natural resources, and minimizing the environmental impacts associated with energy production.

Examples of eligible projects include building envelope insulation, window replacement, lighting upgrades, programmable thermostats and occupancy sensors, heating and cooling system retrofit, high efficiency appliances, and a transfer switch. An energy efficiency assessment or audit refers to a review of the property conducted by a third-party professional that results in recommendations for improving energy efficiency and/or reducing energy costs.

Grants will be capped at a maximum of $200,000 per grantee. Funding is provided through the U.S. Department of Energy State Energy Program to Illinois. The Notice of Funding Opportunity and additional information can be found on Illinois EPA's Office of Energy webpage Energy webpage. Applications for the Efficient and Resilient Public Building Grant will be accepted through September 30, 2026. Applicants must apply through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act Grantee Portal.

Advancing Innovative Manufacturing (AIM) Tax Credit

The Advancing Innovative Manufacturing Illinois Tax Credit (AIM) is a new tax incentive program designed to accelerate manufacturing projects that integrate cutting-edge technologies into their processes. Established in 2025, AIM is designed to strengthen business growth and investment across the state's top industry sectors. The program supports projects that utilize advanced manufacturing and involve substantial qualified capital improvements. The application is now open for this program and can be found here.

For more information about the AIM program, contact your DCEO Team RED member and/or use this link.

CDBG Community Revitalization Program

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's new Community Revitalization grant program administered in the Office of Community Development and funded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's Community Development Block Grant is now open. **Applications will be considered on a rolling basis.**

This anxiously awaited program will make funding available to rural areas throughout the state for sidewalk improvements/streetscapes, rehabilitation of publicly owned commercial/industrial buildings, historic preservation of non-residential buildings, renovation or conversion to another purpose of a closed building, and non-residential demolition of publicly owned property. Rural communities have long suffered a variety of unmet needs with no funding to address the challenges.

The Community Revitalization Program will allow projects like demolition of a former nursing home next to a hospital, allowing for a health and fitness park; renovation of a historic, former train station into a community center; creation of a downtown streetscape to make it ADA friendly; conversion of a closed school into affordable apartments; or façade improvements to arrest deterioration of historic buildings.

The demolition activity of Community Revitalization is also available to urban areas to assist with long-term neglect and abandonment of properties. **Demolition projects must create open space and cannot be redeveloped for a minimum of five years.** The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) can be accessed at this link. Recordings, application workshops and technical assistance sessions can be accessed at this link.

Economic Empowerment Center (EEC) Round 2

The EEC Grant Program was developed to help create an inclusive business ecosystem within communities that have historically faced systemic barriers to entry and growth through dynamic partnerships, targeted outreach, and tailored programs and initiatives. DCEO has previously awarded $2.5 million in grant funding to 10 recipients through the EEC Grant Program. **Eligible Applicants**

- Career education agencies; and
- Non-profit organizations, including but not limited to: local development corporations, chambers of commerce, community-based outreach centers, and community-based organizations that provide services to underserved businesses and entrepreneurs.

Award Range: $250,000-$500,000

Deadline: Rolling until funding is exhausted. DCEO hosted an Application Workshop and Technical Assistance webinar for EEC grant applicants and the webinar was recorded, and the recording will be available on the DCEO website.

How to Apply?

Economic Empowerment Center Program Application

- Supporting documents below:
    - An electronic/digital photo of the project location and copy of the CDFI Map Area, if applicable
    - Mission Statement
    - Articles of Incorporation
    - Copies of Organizational Chart, and more

Illinois EPA Lead Service Line Inventory Grant

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has announced $6.57 million to assist communities across the state in meeting the inventory requirements of the Lead Service Line Replacement and Notification Act (LSLRNA). More information can be found at this link. Please note this grant program is for lead service line inventorying purposes only, and lead service line replacement costs are ineligible for this grant program.

CEJA Capacity Grant Program Is Now LIVE!

The Workforce Policy Lab, in collaboration with the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO), is excited to introduce the CEJA Capacity Grant Program—a bold new initiative to strengthen a more inclusive and resilient clean energy future for Illinois. Launching in 2026, this program will provide current and prospective DCEO CEJA grantees and sub-grantees with robust capacity-building support, along with grant awards starting at $100,000. This direct investment will empower 501(c)(3) organizations across the state to scale clean

energy workforce development, expand contractor opportunities, and drive equitable economic growth in communities statewide.

The **CEJA Capacity Grant Program** Information Session recording, transcript, and slide deck have now been posted at this link. As you begin your application, please keep in mind that we offer several resources to help ensure your application is as successful as possible. These resources are on the program landing page under "Technical Assistance & Resources." We will also host two Technical Assistance Office Hours for applicants seeking clarification or application assistance.

Illinois EPA Unsewered Communities Planning Grants

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Acting Director James Jennings announced a new funding opportunity to assist communities where there are currently no wastewater collection and/or treatment facilities. Illinois EPA is making $1 million available for grants through the Unsewered Communities Planning Grant Program, which will assist small and disadvantaged communities in developing a project plan that identifies a solution to wastewater collection and treatment needs. A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) has been posted to the Illinois EPA website.

The Unsewered Communities Planning Grant Program (UCPGP) provides grant funding to develop a plan that will address problems associated with the collection and treatment of wastewater in an unsewered community. Ultimately, this information can be used in an application for a project that would be funded by the Illinois Unsewered Communities Construction Grant Program. Funding for the UCPGP is made possible by utilizing a portion of Illinois EPA's Water Pollution Control Loan Program Loan Support funds generated from loan repayments. Applicants that qualify can receive funding up to $30,000, and Illinois EPA expects to fund up to 50 grants.

All required forms and information are available on the Illinois EPA's UCPGP webpage. **The application period will remain open until all funding has been expended.** Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and completeness and awarded on a first-come, first-serve basis. Applicants must be pre-qualified through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal.

Illinois DCEO Provides Help with Seeking Federal Funds!

Federal Grant Support Program – Round 2

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's (DCEO)'s Federal Grant Support Program-Round 2 is open and will make $16.9 million available to Illinois-based proposals seeking competitive federal grants. This match program will encourage more applicants to apply for federal grant opportunities, provide critical assistance to meet the minimum match eligibility requirements, increase the competitiveness of applications, and provide the State of Illinois with an opportunity to make a firm commitment and demonstration of support for projects that are well aligned with the State's economic development goals and priorities. For more information about the program, including links to the NOFO and application, visit this link.

Office Resources

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