**Section 691.210 Program Administration**

a) Programs

Businesses seeking financial assistance under this Subpart must submit an application to the Department's Qualified Partner for one of the following programs:

1) Startup Grants Program: A grant program to provide relief for lost revenues and costs incurred due to COVID-19 for businesses that incorporated and started operations between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021.

2) Reactivating Vacant and Mainstreet Places (REVAMP) Grants Program: A grant program that reimburses businesses for COVID-19 related costs incurred after March 13, 2020, for businesses occupying a commercial property that had been vacant without a tenant for a minimum of 90 consecutive days ending on or after March 1, 2020.

b) Application Process

1) Interested businesses shall apply to the programs in this Subpart, utilizing an electronic application provided by the Department’s Qualified Partner. The Department will list on its website (https://www2.illinois.gov/dceo/Pages/default.aspx) a link to the website hosted by the Qualified Partner. Once the interested business arrives at the Qualified Partner’s website and accesses the appropriate hyperlink for the grant program the business seeks to apply to, the business will be forwarded to the application portal for that program which is administered by the Qualified Partner of the Department. To assist in determining the eligibility of an applicant under either program in this Subpart, the following documents will be required from an applicant:

A) An attestation that will be provided by the Department's Qualified Partner that attests to their eligibility for the program and compliance with programmatic requirements for funding as described for this Subpart;

B) A valid government-issued identification (driver's license, State ID, passport, or Matricular Consular Card) for the business owner or the authorized representative of the business;

C) Proof of establishment by a business organization including copies of articles of incorporation, articles of organization, certificate of good standing in the State of Illinois, or a business license from the appropriate local government agency that exercises jurisdiction over the applicant;

D) Proof of tax exemption as provided by the IRS, if applicable;

E) Proof of professional licensure (if the applicant operates a business that requires a professional license);

F) If applying for funding under the REVAMP program, relevant receipts, credit card statements, or bank statements that reflect expenditures incurred, which are reimbursable by the program applied to;

G) Tax returns for 2019, 2020, and 2021, if applicable;

H) A utility bill that provides proof of address for the business; and

I) If applying for funding under the REVAMP program, a copy of the applicant’s fully executed lease agreement, proof of mortgage payment, or a copy of the deed of the business.

2) Completed application materials must be signed by the applicant's authorized representative and received by the Department’s Qualified Partner by the announced deadline for the submission of applications. If an applicant has been marked ineligible, the Qualified Partner will provide the applicant with electronic notice of their ineligibility. The notice will contain the reason for ineligibility and a link to a decision appeal form. The Qualified Partner will review appeals by re-reviewing the application, the appeal form, and any supporting documentation provided by the applicant. Upon conclusion of this review, the Qualified Partner will provide a follow-up email to the business identifying a decision and supporting evidence for that decision. The Department’s Qualified Partner will review appeals until funds are exhausted.

c) Selection Process

1) The Department’s Qualified Partner shall select awardees under the programs in this Subpart using a competitive scoring model to determine the prioritization of review for each application. The following is each worth one priority point if applicable to the applicant:

A) Applicants operating a business that earned gross receipts of less than $5 million annually;

B) A business within a hard-hit industry;

C) A business that has not received funding from a COVID-19 relief program that was funded utilizing federal dollars (including federal funds that was issued by the State of Illinois); or

D) A business operating within a DIA.

2) Applications with the highest number of priority points will be reviewed first by the Qualified Partner. Once the order of review is determined, the Qualified Partner will review each application until funds are exhausted. For eligible applicants selected in the REVAMP program, the amount of an award will be based on 100% of eligible expenditures incurred, providing the applicant incurred at least $5,000 of eligible expenditures, and the award will be capped at a maximum amount of $150,000. For eligible applicants selected under the Startup Grants Program, the amount of award will be a flat amount pre-determined by the Department to align with estimated costs and revenues lost by eligible businesses. These amounts may vary based on the date that the applicant opened and whether the applicant is a home-based business and/or sole proprietor. Once an award is determined, the Qualified Partner will notify the applicant; and require the business to sign a Financial Assistance agreement and an attestation before funds are disbursed to the applicant.

d) Noncompliance

A Program Participant shall return all funds provided under either program in this Subpart if it does not comply with any requirements in this Part or breaches any material term of the Financial Assistance agreement or attestation. A material term is any term that relates to eligibility for Program participation, reimbursement under the SLFRF, or compliance with State and federal law, including COVID-19 Prevention Directives. Recovery of funds in the event of noncompliance may be effectuated by any means authorized under Illinois law, including the Grant Funds Recovery Act for any Financial Assistance in the form of a grant or the Illinois False Claims Act for any Financial Assistance gained using false information.

e) Reporting Requirements

Each Program Participant and Qualified Partners shall submit all reports required pursuant to any project and expenditure reporting requirements identified by the Department of the Treasury in a format and at a time required by the Department. As this information becomes more readily available through federal rules and guidelines, the Department will include this information on its website and other available mediums.

f) Recordkeeping Requirements

1) Program participants shall maintain, for 5 years from the date the award was last expended or returned to the Qualified Partners, adequate books, financial records and supporting documents, statistical records, and all other records pertinent to awards made under this Program. If any litigation, claim, or audit is started before the expiration of the retention period, the records must be retained until all litigation, claims, or audit exceptions involving the records have been resolved, and final action is taken.

2) Program participants shall provide or make available all records related to awards made under this Program to the Qualified Partner, the Department or to the U.S. Department of the Treasury upon request, and to any authorized oversight body, including, but not limited to, the Illinois Attorney General, the Illinois Auditor General, the Illinois Office of the Executive Inspector General, the Government Accountability Office ("GAO"), Treasury's Office of Inspector General ("OIG"), and the Pandemic Relief Accountability Committee ("PRAC").

(Source: Added at 47 Ill. Reg. 3723, effective March 1, 2023)