



Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

JB Pritzker, Governor

December 16, 2022

Governor JB Pritzker
Members of the General Assembly Illinois
State Capitol Building
401 S. 2nd Street
Springfield, IL 62701

Dear Governor Pritzker and Members of the General Assembly:

The following report fulfills the statutory directive that the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) provide the Governor and the Members of the General Assembly with an annual report on the Task Force on Opportunities for At-Risk Women. The Opportunities for At-Risk Women Act (20 ILCS 5075/Article 5) requires that a Task Force is created within DCEO. The duties of the Task Force on Opportunities for At-Risk Women as stated in statute (20 ILCS 5075/Article 10) are to strategize and design a plan for DCEO to partner with State and local governmental agencies, companies, and organizations that aid in helping at-risk women and their families become successful productive citizens.

Program Model

DCEO, through its Office of Minority Economic Empowerment (OMEE) is providing administrative support and technical assistance to the Task Force on Opportunities for At-Risk Women. The Task Force gathers governmental agencies and organizations that aid at-risk women and their families to seek policy improvements that will increase social and economic security for this population. By working together, the Task Force examines how housing assistance, educational advancement, job training, financial literacy, and mental health resources can be better accessed and directly serve the needs of this population.


As outlined in statute, "at-risk women" means women who are at increased risk of incarceration because of poverty, abuse, addiction, financial challenges, illiteracy, or other causes. The term "at-risk women" may include, but shall not be limited to, women who have previously been incarcerated.

Program Status

Unfortunately, the Task Force on Opportunities for At-Risk Women has not met since December 15, 2020 given task force membership turnover and staff constraints at DCEO. As DCEO remains focused on providing support to the state's 450,000 women-owned businesses, we provided more than \$151 million through Business Interruption and Back to Business Grants to women business owners throughout Illinois as part of state's ongoing efforts to assist women business owners and entrepreneurs hardest hit by the COVID-19 pandemic. With the addition of new DCEO-OMEE staff members in the coming months, the Task Force will reconvene and work with the General Assembly members appointed to resume work in Fiscal Year 2023.

Please feel free to contact DCEO with any questions regarding this report.

Sincerely,


Sylvia I. Garcia Director

By 
Kimberly Hill
Chief Operating Officer