

# Message from the President



*Todd Maisch*

*President & CEO*

*Illinois Chamber of  
Commerce*

## **March 19, 2020**

Hello, I wanted to update you on business-related action that has unfolded in the last few days.

### **SBA COVID-19 loans**

We just concluded a conversation with the Midwest Region of the US Small Business Administration (SBA). As we mentioned Monday, DCEO submitted Illinois' application for the [Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program](#) to assist small businesses and private non-profits in paying expenses during the COVID-19 disaster. We believe a decision on that application is imminent, and we know of no hurdles causing denial. Approval would allow Illinois businesses and non-profits to begin submitting their applications.

This is a direct loan program. Applicants will apply directly to the SBA and the SBA will disperse funds directly from the U.S. Treasury to the applicant. There will be considerable funding available, but we recommend getting applications in as quickly as possible. You can also amend your application downstream to ask for more funds if your need becomes greater.

You can read the SBA's one pager on the program [here](#) and the governor's press release from his announcement [here](#).

We will send more information as it becomes available.

### **DCEO working on economic relief**

Also this week, the Chamber provided our first set of ideas to the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) for economic relief for small businesses. We will continue to be in communication but our first tranche included:

- Recommending state banking regulators communicate flexibility in forbearance related to banks' management of small business loans;
- Expanding opportunities to help the hospitality industry weather the crisis;
- The possibility of a state fiscal stimulus to assist the infrastructure community; and
- Specific needs of the transportation and energy sectors.

We will continue advocating for these options, and are requesting your ideas for actions the state government can take to alleviate the crisis. Please send your suggestions to Whitney at: [wbarnes@ilchamber.org](mailto:wbarnes@ilchamber.org).

### **Mandatory paid leave**

Monday we mentioned concerns from the GOP and business community on the up-front cost of mandatory paid time off on employers included in The Families First Corona Virus Response Act [HR 6201](#). Those concerns were not addressed in the US Senate and the president signed the US House version yesterday.

You can read the US Chamber's analysis of the bill [here](#).

### **Business shut downs**

There has been some confusion in the business community over the shut downs that have ordered over the last week.

In [Executive Order 2020-04](#) banning gatherings of 1,000 or more people, there was an explicit exemption for normal workplace activity. However, in the subsequent [Executive Order 2020-07](#) banning gatherings of 50 or more people, that explicit exemption for workplace activity was removed from the order. The governor has given us verbal insurance that the 50 person limit does not apply to our larger businesses, but they are urging businesses to adhere to the guidelines from the IDPH and the CDC, to keep the number of employees they have in close proximity to each other under 50, and apply social distancing practices as best they can. We have asked the Governor's Office to reinsert that explicit exemption for normal workplace activity in future directions.

At this time, we have no official indication from the administration that they will be moving to a total shut down similar to the shelter-in-place orders seen in [San](#)

[Francisco](#) and [Oak Park](#). However, if the state does move in that direction, we will continue to reach out to the Governor's Office for clarity so businesses can be fully informed and to strike the appropriate balance between public safety and economic distress.

We will continue to monitor this situation closely.

As always, please call me with any questions or concerns at: 217.522.5512 ext. 233.

We anticipate having another update very soon.

Sincerely,

Todd Maisch  
President and CEO  
Illinois Chamber of Commerce