



**Illinois**  
**Department of Commerce**  
& Economic Opportunity  
OFFICE OF ECONOMIC EQUITY & EMPOWERMENT

**SMALL BUSINESS CAPITAL AND INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM**  
**APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**  
*\*formerly OMEE*

**PLEASE NOTE: Sections 1 through 5** of the OE3 Capital Grant Program Application must not exceed a total of fifteen (15) pages. **Section 6: Supporting Document Checklist** and **Section 7: Applicant Certification** are not included in this page limit. **Any pages exceeding the 15-page limit for Sections 1 through 5 will not be reviewed or considered.**

**SECTION-BY-SECTION INSTRUCTIONS**

---

**Section 1: Business Information**

- **Project Location**
  - Attach an electronic/digital photo of the project location.
  - Collect this document as part of your Section 1 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 1 Documents**.
- **Business Ownership and Certifications**
  - Indicate your business ownership type, such as SEDI (Socially and Economically Disadvantaged Individual) or VSB (Very Small Business), and attach relevant certifications, like SEDI or BEP certification.
  - Collect this document as part of your Section 1 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 1 Documents**.
- **Business Enterprise Program (BEP)/Veteran Business Program (VBP) Certifications (if applicable)**
  - Collect this document as part of your Section 1 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 1 Documents**.
- **CDFI Investment Area Verification**
  - If your business is located in a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) Investment Area, include a map or documentation that verifies your location within the CDFI zone. You can obtain this information via the website here:  
<https://cimsprodprep.cdfifund.gov/CIMS4/apps/pn-cdfi/index.aspx#?center=-98.299891,38.724&level=4>
  - Collect this document as part of your Section 1 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 1 Documents**.
- **Business Structure and Industry**
  - Select your business structure (e.g., LLC, sole proprietorship) and industry. Make sure your industry selection aligns with your business’s primary operations.

- **Business Permits/Approvals**
  - Upload proof of any required permits or approvals, especially for property acquisition or renovation projects.
  - Collect this document as part of your Section 1 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 1 Documents**.
  
- **Capital Improvements**
  - If grant dollars will be used to make capital improvements to real property structures/land that your business does not own, you must provide a copy of the lease or other agreement (i.e., easements, rights-of-way, etc.) between your organization and the property owner that will allow your business to continue to use the improved premises, for an appropriate length of time, consistent with applicable state law and rules.
  - Collect this document as part of your Section 1 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 1 Documents**.

## Section 2: Funding Request and Project Details

- **Funding Amount Requested**
  - Indicate the amount of funding you are seeking for this project. *Note: Grant awards will not exceed \$245,000.*
  
- **Additional Funding Sources**
  - Specify if additional funding sources outside of the grant funds are necessary to complete the overall project by selecting “Yes” or “No.”
    - If **Yes**, provide details on each funding source, including:
      - **Source** (e.g., federal, state, loans, donations, or fundraising),
      - **Status** of the funding (approved/secured, pending, or not yet applied for), and
      - **Amount** of funds from each source.
  
- **Project Description**
  - Describe your proposed capital improvement project in detail if awarded.
  - Provide an overview of the entire project, including how any additional funding sources will contribute to its completion.
  - Clearly explain how the requested grant funds will be allocated within the project.
  - Include the specific type of improvements you will be making, such as architectural planning and engineering design, site selection and land acquisition, building acquisition, demolition, utility improvements, site preparation and improvements, facility upgrades, new construction of buildings and structures, reconstruction or improvement of existing of buildings and structures, original furnishings or durable equipment purchases, asset replacement, or building expansion. Include specific details such as the planned square footage to be added, the types and quantities of equipment to be purchased, the extent of site or utility improvements, and any structural enhancements or facility expansions.

- **Project Timeline**

- Break down your project's timeline by phases, with specific milestones and estimated dates for each step (e.g., permits obtained, construction start and end dates, expected completion).
- Collect this document as part of your Section 2 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 2 Documents**.

---

### Section 3: Financial Overview

- **Annual Revenue**

- Indicate your business's most recent annual revenue amount. Attach supporting documentation, such as financial statements or tax returns, to verify this figure.
- Collect this document as part of your Section 3 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 3 Documents**.

- **Profit Margin**

- Provide the most recent profit margin percentage for your business. If available, attach documents such as profit and loss statements to support this information.
- Collect this document as part of your Section 3 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 3 Documents**.

- **Significant Financial Obligations**

- List any major financial obligations that impact your business, such as debts or loans. For each obligation, include the type (e.g., loan, line of credit), the total amount owed, and the current payment status (e.g., current, deferred, overdue).
- Collect this document as part of your Section 3 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 3 Documents**.

- **Primary Revenue Sources**

- Describe the primary sources of your business's revenue. Include the main products, services, or other income streams that contribute to your annual revenue.

- **Recent Financial Challenges**

- Explain any recent financial challenges your business has faced, such as declines in revenue, increased costs, or changes in the market. Describe the steps you are taking to address these challenges.

---

### Section 4: Impact Assessment

- **Financial Impact**

- **Projected Financial Impact of the Project**
  - Describe how this project will positively impact your business financially. Include specific projections for anticipated revenue growth, cost savings, or improvements in profitability.

- **Expected Increase in Annual Revenue**
  - Estimate the percentage increase in annual revenue expected as a result of this project. Include specific figures or growth projections over the next 1-3 years.
- **Operating Cost Reductions**
  - List the areas where you anticipate reductions in operating costs (e.g., energy efficiency, labor efficiency). Provide an estimated dollar amount or percentage decrease in expenses related to these improvements.
- **Profitability Improvements**
  - Explain how this project will contribute to an increase in overall profitability, including projected profit margins or other indicators of improved financial performance.
- Attach supporting documents, such as financial projections or past profit and loss statements, to substantiate these impacts.
- Collect this document as part of your Section 4 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 4 Documents**.
- **Employment Impact (Job Creation/Retention)**
  - Use the **Projected Employment Impact** table to indicate the number of jobs created or retained by the project.
  - **Project Employment Impact Table – INSTRUCTIONS - FTE Value**  
DCEO uses Section 3.2 - Projected Employment Impact to document the estimated economic benefits of a proposed grant project based on the projected employment impact. The FTE (Full Time Equivalent) Value Table in Section 3.2 standardizes the DCEO process for collecting and reporting job count data for projected (estimated) jobs at the grant level.
  - For DCEO purposes, an FTE is a measurement unit for assigning a numerical value to an individual employment position (both projected and/or certified jobs; both created and/or retained jobs). For example, while DCEO assigns an FTE value of 1.0 to a permanent full time position, other categories of positions that are estimated to involve a fewer number of hours to be worked over the course of a year will be assigned a lower FTE value of either .5 or .25. DCEO uses this approach so that a job count that includes various categories of jobs is more accurate and is not inflated or overstated. Applicants should be realistic when estimating the number of projected FTEs that may result directly from a grant.
  - For example, when projecting FTEs, the applicant must consider that if approved for funding the grantee will be required at a later date to certify FTE data for all created and retained positions, using the DCEO Job Count FTE Certification Form. Please remember that the FTE count includes only positions that are a direct result of a DCEO grant, meaning the positions would not be created or retained but for the DCEO grant provided.
  - **Created Job:** A new position, not in existence prior to the DCEO grant, to be developed and filled, or an existing unfilled position to be filled; the position could not be filled but for the DCEO grant provided.

- **Retained Job:** An existing position projected to be maintained that otherwise would be eliminated by the grantee but for the DCEO grant provided. Note: a job previously reported as retained during the course of a previous DCEO grant cannot be projected again as retained in the current DCEO grant application if the end date of the previous DCEO grant is less than 24 months prior to the current application date. However, a job reported as retained during the course of a previous DCEO grant can be reported as retained in the current DCEO grant application, if the end date of the previous DCEO grant occurred more than 24 months prior to the date of the current DCEO application.
- **Other Employment Impacts:** This is an optional text field where you can identify other significant employment impacts that are not reported as an FTE value. These impacts may include a positive impact on non-certified jobs, or other positive economic impacts with the applicant organization or elsewhere in the Illinois economy. This area can also be used to identify the number of Temporary Part time Positions that do not meet the minimum requirement of 200 hours of work per position.
- Specify the job types (e.g., full-time, part-time) to be created or retained and provide a timeline for anticipated hiring.
- Collect this document as part of your Section 4 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 4 Documents**.
- **Community Impact**
  - If your project will positively impact the community, especially within a CDFI Investment Area, describe this impact. You may want to include letters of support from community leaders or organizations to demonstrate alignment with local needs, such as economic revitalization or community services.
  - Collect this document as part of your Section 4 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 4 Documents**.

---

## Section 5: Business Sustainability Plan

- **Sustainability Strategy**
  - Explain how you plan to maintain the improvements made by this project over the long term. Outline key performance indicators (KPIs) that you will track, such as revenue growth, cost savings, or environmental impact. Attach financial projections or business plans that support your strategy.
  - Collect this document as part of your Section 5 Supporting Documentation – this will be uploaded via the File Upload Option in Smartsheet as part of a larger document named **Section 5 Documents**.

---

## Section 6: Supporting Documentation Checklist

- **Documentation Requirements**
  - Review the list of required documents carefully. Attach each document listed, ensuring that it's clearly labeled and formatted as specified. These may include certifications, CDFI verification, financial statements, project plans, and letters of support.

---

## Section 7: Applicant Certification

- **Signature and Authorization**
  - The application must be signed by an authorized representative of the business. Ensure that the signature is provided in ink and that the signer's name and title are legible. Digital signatures are not accepted for this application.

---

## File Formatting and Uploading Instructions

Smartsheet allows a **maximum** of ten (10) documents to be uploaded via the File Upload Option. All documents should be converted to a .pdf format. To accommodate this file limitation, combine and name your documents as detailed below:

- Document 1 must be named **Program and Uniform Grant Applications** – The following should be placed in this document, in the order listed below:
  - OE3 Capital Grant Program Application
  - Uniform Grant Application
- Document 2 must be named **Uniform Budget**
  - This is an Excel Spreadsheet
- Document 3 must be named **Disclosures** – The following should be placed in this document, in the order listed below:
  - Conflict of Interest Disclosure
  - Mandatory Disclosures
- Document 4 must be named **Section 1 Documents** - The following should be placed in this document, in the order listed below:
  - 1.4. Project Location
  - 1.5. SEDI-VSB Certification
  - 1.5. BEP-VBP Certification (if applicable)
  - 1.6. CDFI Map
  - 1.10. Permits-Approvals (if answered *yes*)
  - 1.11. Property Agreement (if answered *yes*)
- Document 5 must be named **Section 2 Documents** - The following should be placed in this document, in the order listed below:
  - 2.4. Project Timeline
- Document 6 must be named **Section 3 Documents** - The following should be placed in this document, in the order listed below:
  - 3.1. Annual Revenue
  - 3.2. Profit Margins
  - 3.3. Financial Obligations

- Document 7 must be named **Section 4 Documents** - The following should be placed in this document, in the order listed below:
  - 4.1. Financial Impact
  - 4.2. Job Creation-Retention
  - 4.3. Letters of Support
- Document 8 must be named **Section 5 Documents** - The following should be placed in this document, in the order listed below:
  - 5.1. Sustainability Plan

**Helpful Hint:**

The Numbers above correlate with the Program Application Question. For example, in **1.4. Project Location, 1** refers to the Section number of the Program Application and **4** refers to the question number in that Section. This should help you as you collect your documentation.