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# PRITZKER ADMINISTRATION LAUNCHES COVID-19 SUMMER YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM

***IDHS Also Launches Immigrant Family Support Project for those Excluded from Federal COVID-19 Relief***

**CHICAGO** –The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) today announced two COVID-19 response programs designed to provide much-needed support to Illinois residents – a summer youth program for more than 2,000 at-risk youth and an Immigrant Family Support Project for more than 3,600 families who have been generally excluded from or ineligible for federal COVID-19 relief and unemployment insurance.

"IDHS exists to assist residents who are in greatest need and who have not had access to resources and opportunities," **said IDHS Secretary Grace B. Hou.** "In response to COVID-19, we have deployed additional resources to protect and support people who are experiencing homelessness, people with disabilities, and victims of domestic violence. These two additional projects extend our work to reach marginalized communities and provide some relief during an extremely difficult time."

**Summer Youth Employment Project**

IDHS, with support from the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA), is proud to announce a COVID-19 Summer Youth Employment Program (C-SYEP). Many of Illinois' young people between the ages of 16 and 24 face significant challenges to securing employment this summer. The COVID-19 Summer Youth Employment Program will be implemented and managed by IDHS-funded Youth Services organizations across Illinois.

This group of young people makes up 24% of the overall workforce employed in industries at highest risk of closure due to COVID-19. To address this hardship, the COVID-19 Summer Youth Employment Program seeks to help employ 2,200 low-income, minority and at-risk youth living in high poverty communities and counties hardest hit by the pandemic. The primary objective for youth served in the program will be to develop essential employability skills and to earn entry-level work experience.

Grantees of the program will partner with local employers in need of summer employees. Participating youth will be placed in age-appropriate, ability-appropriate, and experience-appropriate Work-Based Learning Opportunities, Career Development Exp

Eligible youth include those low income cy and are able to provide an I-9 prior to employme d in Champaign; Cook; Lake; Macon; McLean, Peoria, St. Clair, Stephenson, and Winnebago counties.

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**The Immigrant Family Support Project**

The Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) and the Immigrant Funders Collaborative (IFC) launched the COVID-19 Immigrant Family Support Project, which will provide pandemic-related emergency assistance funding to Illinois immigrants – regardless of immigration status – who are facing unemployment, loss of income, medical costs, and food and housing insecurity as a direct result of COVID-19 and are ineligible for any federal funding relief. IDHS will dedicate $2 million to the effort and the IFC, a private foundation funders' collaboration, is raising an initial $750,000 to support the project.

"IDHS, with private philanthropic partners, can leverage our resources to support those families who have been expressly excluded from federal relief funding," said Grace Hou, secretary of the Illinois Department of Human Services. "Immigrants play an essential role in our society and make up the fabric of our communities across the state of Illinois. IDHS is proud to work with our partners on the COVID-19 Immigrant Family Support Project to help Illinois' immigrant community through this crisis. We want everyone to know help is here – for anyone who needs it."

While many Illinoisans have access to support from federal Economic Impact Payments based on the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act) and to other state and federal benefits, many immigrants are excluded. This project will help fill the gap and provide much needed direct support for immigrant families in Illinois.

With the IDHS contribution, the Illinois Coalition of Immigrant and Refugee Rights (ICIRR) will administer funds through a state-wide network of over 60 community-based organizations and Illinois Welcoming Centers who identify, confirm the eligibility of, and enroll families in the program. Through these partners, funding will then be distributed to more than 3,600 affected households of immigrants, focusing on those with the lowest incomes. IFC will also continue fundraising beyond its initial investment.

In order to be eligible for assistance, applicants must meet the following criteria:

• Be a resident of Illinois.
• Have experienced an income disruption due to the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic (either a job loss or reduction in hours).
• Not be eligible for federal stimulus or unemployment insurance.

Priority will be also given to households with income below 200% federal poverty level.

"Before this crisis, Illinois' immigrant communities and communities of color were already predisposed to health, housing, and financial vulnerabilities and inequities. Assistance programs like the COVID-19 Immigrant Family Support Project are a necessary f ds despite their economic contributions to the stat ds of families," said Sylvia Puente, Executive D

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In addition to these funds, immigrants will also be screened for eligibility for SNAP for eligible children of immigrants, Pandemic-EBT, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), and Moms & Babies – temporary healthcare coverage for pregnant women. The COVID-19 Immigrant Family Support Project is part of IDHS' existing commitments to Welcoming Centers and builds on Illinois' history as a Welcoming State. Illinois currently provides immigrants with a wide range of services, such as crisis intervention and services for health, food and housing needs at Welcoming Centers throughout the state.

Information can be found about the COVID-19 Immigrant Family Support Project at www.DHS.Illinois.gov/Welcome (http://www.dhs.illinois.gov/Welcome)

Information can be found about the Summer Youth Employment Program at http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=103366 (http://www.dhs.state.il.us/page.aspx?item=103366)

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## Information

Illinois Economic Plan (/dceo/Pages/EconPlan2019.aspx)
Corporate Accountability (https://dceoapps.ildceo.net/ilcorpacct/)
Awarded Grants (http://granttracker.ildceo.net/)
EDGE Agreements (/dceo/ExpandRelocate/Incentives/Pages/EdgeAgreements.aspx)
Springboard (/sites/springboard/Pages/default.aspx)
Connect with a DCEO Representative (/dceo/Pages/DCEO-Program-Inquiry.aspx)

## Quick Links

Coronavirus.Illinois.gov (https://co
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