

Illinois state programs available to alternative protein producers and investors

These Illinois state grants, loan programs, and tax credits are likely relevant to the alternative protein industry. Companies should assess their eligibility for programs of interest.

Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity

Business Attraction Prime Sites

June 30, 2025 | [Website](#)

This grant is available to businesses that are relocating or expanding operations in Illinois, will create and retain over 200 jobs, and have been approved (within the last six months) or have a pending application for the Illinois Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE) program, Illinois High Impact Business Program (HIB), Reimagining Electric Energy Vehicles (REV) Illinois Program, or Manufacturing Illinois Chips for Real Opportunity (MICRO) Program. Businesses must operate in one of the industries of focus named in the [2019 Illinois Economic Plan](#), which includes agribusiness, agritech, and life sciences. This award offers \$250,000 to \$25 million for infrastructure and capital equipment purchases. Award amounts for eligible projects are formula-based, and an applicant may apply for a grant of up to \$10,000 per new job created. 1:1 funding matching is required.

Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) and Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) Match Program

June 30, 2025 | [Website](#)

Illinois-based small businesses who have received federal [SBIR/STTR](#) awards are eligible for up to \$50,000 in state funding for research and development (R&D) of technologies with commercialization potential.

Equitable Energy Future Grant Program

December 31, 2025 | [Website](#)

This grant supports the development of energy-efficient and renewable energy projects, businesses, and job creation benefiting historically disadvantaged populations. The program provides funding of up to \$1 million.

Innovation Voucher Program

Rolling deadline | [Website](#)

This grant is available to Illinois-based small and mid-sized businesses (businesses who employ 100-500 full-time employees) operating in key industries, including agribusiness, agriculture technology, life sciences, and manufacturing, who partner with a qualified Illinois-based nonprofit institution of higher education. This program provides up to \$75,000 in funds to cover up to 75% of research engagement costs, which includes the sharing of technologies, knowledge, facilities, and equipment.

Visit the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity's [website](#) to learn more.

Illinois Department of Agriculture

Local Food Infrastructure Grant Program

Deadline: TBD | [Website](#)

This grant will be available to Illinois processing facilities, food businesses, and food hubs with 50 employees or fewer who store, process, package, aggregate, or distribute value-added products. Collaborative projects are eligible to receive up to \$250,000 and individual projects are eligible to receive up to \$75,000 to assist applicants with purchasing, leasing to own, renting, building, or installation of infrastructure that will increase market access of Illinois agricultural products to local communities. Applicants will be required to match the funds unless a high need condition is demonstrated. The Illinois Department of Agriculture is currently creating new administrative rules for this grant program. More information on eligibility, application processes, match requirements, and timelines will be announced at a later date.

Visit the Illinois Department of Agriculture's [website](#) to learn more.

Loan and equity programs

Advantage Illinois Participation Loan Program

Rolling deadline | [Website](#)

This program provides low-interest loans to small businesses by partnering with local lenders across the state. Illinois purchases a portion of the loan by financing “up to the lesser of 25% of the project cost, 50% of the loan, or \$2 million, with a maximum term of 7 years.” Businesses must have “a present challenge in obtaining financing through normal means” as defined by the financial institution and also have fewer than 750 employees, operate in Illinois, be in good standing with the Secretary of State, be clear of any back taxes, and have had no bankruptcies, judgments, or liens in the past five years.

Illinois Innovation Venture Fund (INVENT)

Rolling deadline | [Website](#)

The Illinois Innovation Venture Fund (INVENT) is a \$114 million direct equity capital program funded through the U.S. Department of the Treasury State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI) and administered by the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO). This program provides equity investments to small businesses (less than 10 employees), Capital Disadvantaged Business owners, businesses owned and controlled by socially and economically disadvantaged individuals, and businesses in industries aligned with the following key sectors:

- Agriculture, agtech, next generation agriculture, food processing.
- Energy, energy technology, clean energy production.
- Information Technology.
- Life sciences, healthcare, medical technology.
- Manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, industry 4.0.
- Quantum information sciences & technology, quantum computing, AI, microelectronics.
- Transportation, distribution, logistics, mobility.

Find more information on eligibility on the program’s [FAQ page](#).

Tax credit incentive programs

Economic Development for a Growing Economy (EDGE)

Rolling deadline | [Website](#)

EDGE for Startups is a tax credit incentive program designed to encourage startups to invest, create, and retain jobs in Illinois. Businesses must have been incorporated 10 years ago or less, have never had any Illinois income tax liability, and be ready to hire full-time W2 employees to be eligible. Please see the [EDGE website](#) for additional requirements and minimum investment requirements, if applicable.

- **Tax credits for new hires:** 50% of income tax withholdings of new jobs created within the state.
- **Tax credits for retained jobs:** 25% of income tax withholdings.
- **Additional savings:** In underserved areas, savings increase by an additional 25%.
- **Training costs:** The program also offers a credit of 10% on new employee training costs.

Illinois Angel Investment Tax Credit Program

Quarterly deadline | [Website](#)

Investors may claim 25% of an investment into a Qualified New Business Venture (QNBV) in Illinois, up to \$2 million in investment for a \$500,000 credit. For more information on eligibility requirements, visit the [Illinois Angel Investment Program webpage](#).

Small Business Jobs Creation Tax Credit Program

[Website](#)

Small businesses that meet certain eligibility criteria and create one or more new, full-time positions that meet the [eligibility requirements](#) can receive a \$2,500 tax credit. Eligible jobs must pay at least \$10 an hour or \$18,200 annually and must last for one full year.

Research & Development (R&D) Tax Credit

[Website](#)

Illinois companies who are seeking to expand research activities in the state may be eligible for a 6.5% income tax credit on qualified R&D costs. For more information on qualifying expenses and claiming the R&D Tax Credit, contact the Illinois Department of Revenue's Business Hotline at 217-524-4772.

Programs with closed application periods

Construction and/or Renovation to Buildings, Additions, or Structures Program

[Website](#)

This grant was available to businesses aiming to promote a clean environment, bolster the state's economy, and improve quality of life in Illinois. The program provides grants for new construction or building (interior and exterior) renovations. Award amounts vary; however, previous grant awards ranged from \$20,000 to \$13.5 million.

Land & Building Acquisition Program

[Website](#)

This grant was available to businesses aiming to promote a clean environment, bolster the state's economy, and improve quality of life in Illinois. The grant provides funding for costs of improved or unimproved real property, title opinions, surveying and real estate fees, title transfer taxes, and other related expenses, including construction or renovation on property after purchase. Award amounts vary; however, recent grant recipients were awarded \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

Megasites Development Program

[Website](#)

This grant was available to small businesses for industrial development needs, such as infrastructure and site preparation activities. Eligible applicants' location sites had to consist of at least 400 acres with clear title, and zoning needed to be for future industrial use. Grant amounts ranged from \$2.5 million to \$4.55 million with 1:1 cash matching.

Resources

- **Innovate Illinois**: A public-private coalition created by the Governor of Illinois to obtain federal funding for the state for science, technology, and climate initiatives. The coalition seeks to use federal investment to bring business to the state, widen the state's tech ecosystem, and create opportunities for the people of Illinois.
- **Illinois Catalog of State Financial Assistance**: A comprehensive database of Illinois' financial assistance programs.
- **Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity** (DCEO)
 - **DCEO grant tracker**
 - **DCEO Small Business Assistance**
- **Illinois Department of Agriculture**
- **University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign's iFAB** (Illinois Fermentation and Agriculture Biomanufacturing Hub)
- **Alternative Protein Innovation Task Force**

About GFI

The Good Food Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit working internationally to make alternative proteins like plant-based and cultivated meat delicious, affordable, and accessible. GFI advances open-access research, mobilizes resources and talent, and empowers partners across the food system to create a sustainable, secure, and just protein supply. GFI is funded entirely by private philanthropic support.



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