

Report to the 104th General Assembly
2024 Business Development Relocation Survey
July 2025

State of Illinois

Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO)

BACKGROUND

Pursuant to 20 ILCS 605/605-456, the Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (“DCEO” or “Department”) conducted a Business Development Relocation Survey in May of 2025 regarding business relocations from Illinois during calendar year 2024. The statute mandates that a report be prepared annually compiling responses from businesses who have been surveyed by the Department as to why the businesses left the state, where the businesses relocated, and what, if anything, could have been done to keep them in Illinois, including offering incentives to stay.

ABOUT DCEO’S ROLE IN PROMOTING A POSITIVE BUSINESS CLIMATE

Illinois is a national leader in key industries such as manufacturing, technology, agriculture, energy, transportation, and life sciences, boasting an annual gross domestic product over \$1.1 trillion. As the state’s lead economic development agency, DCEO endeavors to provide employers with what they need to succeed here: strategic sites, a skilled workforce, and high-quality customer service from the State.

METHODOLOGY

The Department developed a preliminary list of businesses that relocated establishments from Illinois to a different state or country in 2024 using Dun & Bradstreet’s Market Insight business intelligence tool. This tool includes information on more than 1.5 million Illinois business establishments, including data on business moves both in and out of Illinois based on U.S. Postal Service change of address data. This search identified 244 establishments potentially relevant to the study.

Dun & Bradstreet provided email contacts for 126 of these establishments. Email addresses for the remaining establishments on the list were not available in the database. DCEO attempted to identify appropriate email contacts for the remaining establishments through internet searches. Through this same due diligence, the Department was able to determine that a significant number of “moves” identified by the database did not represent business relocations relevant to this report. Ultimately, the Department identified 11 additional email contacts (for a total of 137) associated with establishments that potentially relocated from Illinois during 2023.

Each business with an identified email address received an email explaining the purpose of the study and a link to the survey instrument. Of these, 26 were “bounced back” as undeliverable. One week later, each address received a reminder.

SURVEY RESULTS

DCEO’s survey instrument was brief, limited to 14 questions. This brevity was intended to encourage as high a response rate as possible. The survey questions can be broken into four sections:

- Nature and destination of relocation
- Characteristics of the company
- Communications with economic development representatives

- Reasons for relocation

Unfortunately, the Department received only two survey responses. One respondent indicated that the company did not relocate any operations from Illinois establishments in 2024, and was therefore not relevant to this report.

The other respondent did indicate that it shifted operations from an Illinois establishment to another in Pennsylvania, citing “company restructuring” as the reason. This mid-sized company (100-499 employees) closed a small office in Illinois with “9 or fewer” employees, shifting operations to a larger, more established location in Philadelphia. The company indicated that incentives in the respective states did not play a role in the decision, and economic development officials in Illinois were not consulted.

CONCLUSIONS

Having received only one relevant survey response, the Department is unable to draw any conclusions regarding the motivations of companies relocating from Illinois or of the potential for incentives to retain their operations.