



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity

**OFFICE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY**

February 19, 2026

Governor JB Pritzker
Members of the General Assembly
Illinois State Capitol Building
401 S. 2nd Street
Springfield, IL 62701

Dear Governor and Members of the General Assembly:

The following report fulfills the statutory directive requiring the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) to provide the Governor and Members of the General Assembly with an annual report on the activities of the Office of Business Permits and Regulatory Assistance, commonly known as the Business Information Center (First Stop). The Business Assistance and Regulatory Reform Act (20 ILCS 608) authorized the Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity (Department) to create the Office, which is tasked with consolidating information about existing programs across State government, assisting businesses with fewer than 500 employees in meeting requirements, and performing other functions specified in the Act to improve the State's business climate by making it easier for small and mid-sized businesses to navigate State requirements. This goal is achieved by providing timely and accurate information regarding business requirements.

Please feel free to contact the Department with any questions about this report.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "K. Richards".

Kristin A. Richards
Director
Illinois Department of Commerce & Economic Opportunity

2025

Annual Report to the General Assembly



Business Information Center (First Stop)

(Office of Business Permits and Regulatory Assistance)

Business Assistance & Regulatory Reform Act (P.A. 88-0404.)



Illinois
Department of Commerce
& Economic Opportunity

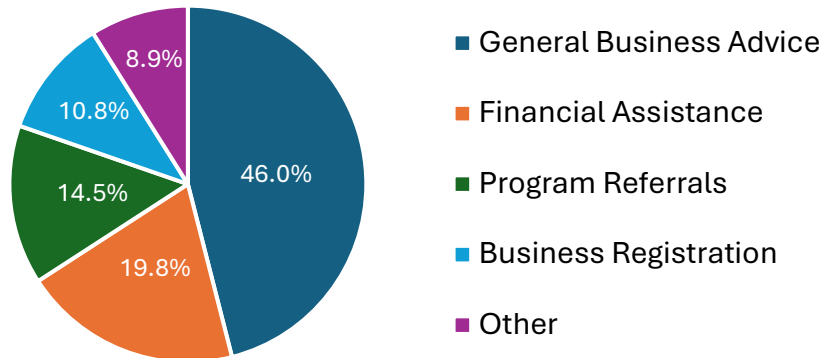
OFFICE OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP,
INNOVATION & TECHNOLOGY

The Business Information Center (First Stop) was created under the Business Assistance and Regulatory Reform Act (20 ILCS 608) as the Office of Business Permits and Regulatory Assistance. It provides entrepreneurs, existing small businesses, and startups with detailed information on business licenses, permits, and government regulations. Business specialists support entrepreneurs by helping them understand and navigate regulatory requirements and by connecting them to relevant state and local resources.

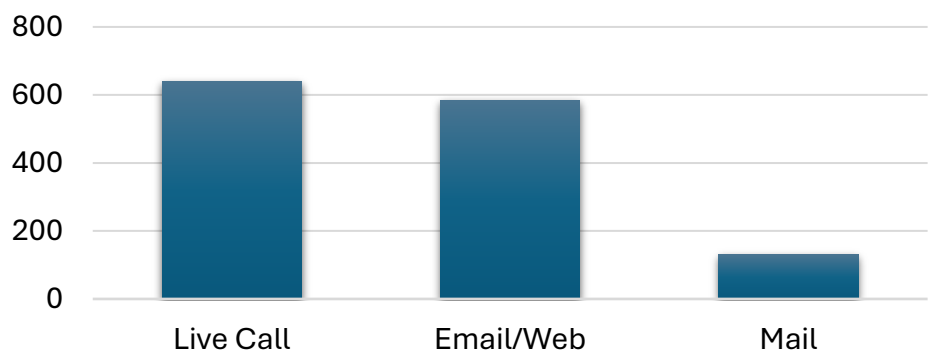
Department Activity

In 2025, the Business Information Center (First Stop) continued to provide information and technical support by phone, email, and mail, assisting both new and established businesses with questions related to starting a business in Illinois, as well as licenses, permits, regulations, programs, resources, incentives, and more. The office offered entrepreneurs and small business owners no-cost startup kits, access to an online searchable knowledge base for licensing and regulatory information, and clear guides on a wide range of business topics. Working in collaboration with other state agencies, the Center ensured that information remained accurate, regularly updated, and expanded within the self-service knowledge base. In addition, the office referred businesses to other state resources and highlighted opportunities they might qualify for to further support their growth.

CY25 Request for Assistance by Category



CY25 Request for Assistance by Type



Core Services of the Business Information Center

Business Specialists & Services for Diverse Communities

The Business Information Center is led by Manager Jenny Malloy and supported by two full-time business specialists, including one who provides dedicated Spanish-language assistance. Together, the team helps new and established business owners navigate Illinois' regulatory processes and connects them with federal, state, and local resources to support business launch and growth.

As part of its commitment to equitable access across Illinois' diverse communities, the Center ensures that Spanish-speaking entrepreneurs receive direct support and have access to expanded Spanish-language materials, including key publications such as the *Starting Your Business in Illinois* handbook. The team also connects entrepreneurs from diverse backgrounds with programs and resources designed to support their specific demographic needs, ensuring that all business owners can access opportunities that promote long-term success. In addition, the Center facilitates communication between business clients and state agencies, helping resolve challenges related to regulatory requirements.

For assistance, the Business Information Center can be reached through the Helpline at 800-252-2923 or by email at BIC@Illinois.gov.

Online Knowledge Base of Business Resources & Requirements

The Business Information Center utilizes Oracle Service Cloud to host its knowledge base system, a comprehensive database containing more than 500 business-related questions and answers. Self-service information is easily accessible on the [Business Information Center website](#). The Center works closely with state agencies to verify the accuracy of the information provided and to expand the knowledge base when updates or new regulatory details are required. This ongoing collaboration helps ensure that users receive reliable, up-to-date guidance and a seamless self-service experience.

Business Start-up Assistance

The program's business startup package is anchored by the *Starting Your Business in Illinois* handbook, available in both English and Spanish, with links accessible on the [DCEO website](#). This Publications & Business Guide addresses frequently asked questions and common challenges for new businesses, and includes key government agency listings, a business plan outline, a feasibility checklist, and other essential resources that help entrepreneurs understand the steps involved in establishing a business in Illinois.

