

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Governor Pritzker’s vision for Illinois is rooted in the state’s history of innovation and legacy of possibility and promise. As Illinois, and the nation, has faced significant challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Governor Pritzker has prioritized preserving the health and safety of Illinois residents — a commitment that saves lives and simultaneously sets the strongest possible foundation for economic recovery. A defining feature of Governor Pritzker’s COVID-19 response has been protecting hardworking families from additional hardship and launching the nation’s largest pandemic relief grant program for small businesses and the nation’s largest housing assistance program. Looking forward, Governor Pritzker’s recovery plan for Illinois prioritizes families, small businesses and the most vulnerable — building a better future for our children and greater opportunity for all Illinoisans.

Keeping Illinois Safe

From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, Illinois has been a national leader in protecting its residents. Governor Pritzker has put people first, ensuring that tests and treatment are broadly available, protecting Illinoisans from the worst effects of the financial downturn, securing over 140 million pieces of PPE, and leading with proven and targeted mitigation efforts. Guided by the latest science and local and national data, Governor Pritzker has led the Midwest in building out a testing infrastructure, testing more than 13 million specimens for COVID-19 and deploying mobile testing sites in over 450 communities in 2020 alone — contributing to the state’s ability to prevent further spread of the virus in our communities. The Governor has also expanded healthcare access and coverage for those who are uninsured by providing coverage of COVID-19 testing and treatment to all Illinois residents at no cost. He mandated telehealth coverage to increase healthcare access to vulnerable populations, including mental health services. Looking ahead, the state continues to efficiently provide the COVID-19 vaccine to all eligible Illinois residents by working with local health departments and launching state-supported mass vaccination sites across Illinois. Prioritizing equity and protecting the most vulnerable Illinoisans is a critical component of every phase of the state’s vaccine distribution plan. Under Governor Pritzker’s leadership, Illinois has proven to be among the best in class when it comes to fighting COVID-19.

Advocating for a Responsible Fiscal Management

Governor Pritzker has fulfilled his promise of proposing balanced and responsible state budgets that pay down the bills and backlogs of past financial mismanagement, while also investing in the things that we hold most dear: strong schools for our children, healthcare access for our families, strong roads and infrastructure for industry, and greater economic opportunity for all. The Governor continues to advocate for long-term structural budget improvements that address Illinois’ regressive tax system and high property taxes that, combined with sales taxes, cause the middle class to pay more than double the rate than the wealthy. The Governor remains committed to operating a government in which tax dollars are used effectively.

Investing in Education

Even in challenging times, it is critical for Illinois to maintain its investment in schools to sustain long-term growth. Governor Pritzker continues to prioritize needed funding for early childhood education by creating the nation’s largest childcare grant program, with \$290 million going directly to childcare centers during the pandemic. In his first two years in office, the Governor has also worked to rebuild universities and community colleges by restoring scholarship dollars for low-income students and expanding career and technical education



Governor Pritzker visits a food bank distribution center in Springfield during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic.

investments for the first time in a decade. Governor Pritzker has heightened his commitment to education during the pandemic by providing additional relief for those saddled with student loans. He also established the Youth Investment Program to assist youth ages 16-24 who are in at-risk situations obtain employment opportunities. Governor Pritzker believes that the state's economy grows when there is a clear commitment to strong schools, quality vocational training, community colleges and higher education.

Standing Up for Working Families and Small Businesses

One of Governor Pritzker's first acts in office was to sign a law increasing Illinois' minimum wage, and he continues to build upon that momentum for working people. From the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, he has prioritized working families by granting essential workers access to childcare services through the Child Care Assistance Program for approximately \$1 per month. The Governor ensured food and housing security by securing SNAP waivers to ensure all Illinoisans have access to healthy, nutritious food. He also provided more than \$320 million in rental and mortgage assistance to households across the state and prohibited evictions to keep Illinois residents safe and housed through the pandemic.

Governor Pritzker's robust response to the financial impact of the pandemic has helped rebuild small businesses. Governor Pritzker's Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity (DCEO) delivered over \$1 billion in COVID-19 relief — \$270 million in Business Interruption Grants for childcare providers; \$270 million for additional Business Interruption Grants; \$250 million in the local government CURE program; \$275 million for LIHEAP and CSBG emergency assistance programs; \$20 million in downstate small-business stabilization grants; and \$14 million for emergency hospitality grants. These programs represent only a few ways Governor Pritzker assisted renters, homeowners, food banks, small-business owners, communities of color, and working families through employment assistance programs and grant programs — including a modified state stimulus check program.

Reforming Criminal Justice

Building a more equitable criminal justice system will help keep all Illinois families safe and build opportunity for every community. Governor Pritzker and Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton outlined an agenda aimed at modernizing the criminal code, ending cash bail, combatting cycles of recidivism, and increasing police accountability in the name of shaping our state into a lesson in true justice for the nation. The Illinois Black Caucus advanced historic criminal justice reform legislation prioritizing equity and justice, which the Governor signed into law in 2021. This is a substantial step toward dismantling systemic racism, reinforcing Illinois as a national leader in pursuing a more safe and fair criminal justice system. Illinois has banned private correctional centers and private immigration detention centers. The Governor also signed legislation to ensure the 20,000 people detained pre-trial each year have an opportunity to participate in our democracy by voting while in detention. The state awarded tens of millions of dollars to lift up communities harmed by the war on drugs, while bringing the state's prison population down by about 25% since the beginning of the pandemic. This holistic approach addresses the structural flaws of a criminal justice system that disproportionately impacts people of color and often traps people in a cycle of incarceration.

Rebuilding Illinois' Infrastructure

Illinois is the nation's supply chain hub, and the state's infrastructure must be maintained to serve this vital role. After years of neglect, the Governor is updating and repairing our state's aging railways, roads, bridges and freshwater transportation assets through Rebuild Illinois — the largest infrastructure investment in a generation. The state's vertical infrastructure also calls for additional investments. In uncertain times, Governor Pritzker will not strip the functions of government to achieve an ideological agenda, improving 1,700 miles of highway and over 120 bridges in fiscal year 2020 alone. He believes in reinvesting in the organizations and critical infrastructure that serves all Illinoisans.



Governor Pritzker highlights the importance of being counted in the 2020 Census at an outreach event in Waukegan. The state invested a historic \$29 million to help community groups educate the public, and ensure no one was missed in the census count.

Transitioning to a Clean Energy Future

As a leader in fighting climate change, Governor Pritzker is committed to supporting Illinois' communities as the state transitions to a clean energy future, announcing eight principles to put Illinois on the path to 100% clean energy in an equitable and efficient manner. The Governor believes in increasing utility accountability and transparency, creating new clean energy jobs in Illinois, reducing harmful emissions, and maintaining low energy costs for consumers and industrial users. As an advocate for ratepayers, the Governor will ensure that any legislation the General Assembly produces on energy will put consumers and the climate first.

Governor's Staff Members

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