

Pritzker announces \$40M grant program to promote development-ready ‘megsites’

Rebuild Illinois funds will be open to private, public, nonprofit entities



[Illinois.gov](https://www.illinois.gov)/via Capitol News Illinois Gov. JB Pritzker is seen Monday at a news conference in Chicago where he announced a new state grant program aimed at making large areas of land ready for broad commercial development.

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Gov. JB Pritzker on Monday announced the creation of a \$40 million grant program to incentivize the creation of large development-ready areas known as “megsites” across the state.

Megsites are large swaths of land, developed to attract businesses such as manufacturing plants, warehouses and distribution centers. Pritzker said developing these sites will help make Illinois more competitive, especially as sectors including clean energy and manufacturing are rapidly expanding in the U.S.

The Megsites Development Program announced Monday uses Rebuild

Illinois capital funds aimed at providing the necessary infrastructure improvements to develop these megasites. Other eligible costs include various land acquisition, cleanup and development expenses.

“Illinois is home to some of the largest such sites in the country, all ripe for fresh development,” Pritzker said at a Chicago news conference. “The new megasites investment program grants will help communities innovate their own business attraction efforts and will spur economic development in communities across our great state.”

The program is open to private entities, nonprofits and local governments, and the application portal is open through April 6. Those receiving the grant must match each dollar granted by the state with other private or local funding.

Grant allotments would range from \$250,000 up to \$5 million, depending on the acreage of the site. Eligible sites must have at least 200 contiguous acres and applicants must own or have an agreement in place to acquire the property when they apply.

Kristin Richards, acting director of the Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity, said the investment-ready sites may lure manufacturing and distribution hubs, or large scale one-stop shops that produce multi-part products within one location.

“I like to think of megasites as turnkey houses: move-in ready, with zero hassle, which is exactly what fast-growing businesses are looking for,” Richards said.

Intersect Illinois, an independent, nonprofit economic development organization that often partners with state organizations including DCEO, announced their Vetted Sites Initiative alongside Pritzker at the Monday morning news conference.

The Vetted Sites Initiative, intended to aid businesses seeking out readily equipped property sites, would help businesses interested in moving to Illinois.

“The idea here is to identify large sites that can be brought up to speed quickly so that we can promote them across the country and even around the world,” said Dan Seals, president of Intersect Illinois.

To help companies look for these “turn-key” locations in Illinois, Intersect Illinois has created a property finder that has more than 150 investment-ready sites in Illinois and a standalone guide with megasites more than 1,000

acres.

Pritzker said that programs such as the Megasite Development Program are necessary to helping economic development as COVID-19 has eased up in recent years.

“As we’ve come out, I’ve been very aggressive. That’s not just in the last few months, that’s really over the last year and a half, two years, to make sure that we’ve got programs that are incentives for businesses, like Megasites,” Pritzker said. “Let’s prepare for them what they need.”