



Dear Friend,

I hope you had a wonderful holiday season and a happy new year. I enjoyed my time at home with my family this winter, but it's great being back in Springfield to kick off our spring legislative session. We have a shortened session calendar this year, but that won't stop us from pursuing countless new legislative measures to improve the livelihood of Illinois families. I'm excited to continue working on legislation to advance rights for individuals in nursing facilities, and individuals with severe and chronic disabilities who are undocumented. I am also looking forward to introducing legislation to increase transparency of workplace COVID-19 data from manufacturers, and increase access to necessary products like diapers for single mothers and working families.

Kendall County Small Business Grant

The [Kendall County Small Business Grant Program](#) is designed to assist small businesses that experienced a loss of revenue due to the COVID-19 Pandemic. Qualifying small businesses may be granted up to a maximum of \$25,000. In order to qualify, your small business must be currently operating and have operated in both 2019 and 2020. Email will be the primary form of communication. Funding for the Kendall County Small Business Grant Program comes from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021. If there are any questions, please email arpagrants@co.kendall.il.us. The application will close on February 23rd, 2022.

Reflecting on MLK and Muhammad Ali

The Illinois Muslim Civic Coalition, which championed getting Muhammad Ali Day recognized statewide, will host a virtual and in-person dialogue from 1 to 2 p.m. Monday on Ali's and King's models

of hope, courage and conviction through extreme challenges. To register, sign up at forms.gle/YcfXsChRPjqfX5RAA.

Raise your sleeve for National Blood Donor Month

January is National Blood Donor Month, a time to celebrate the lifesaving impact of blood and platelet donors. Only 37% of the U.S. population is eligible to donate blood, but less than 10% do annually. Meanwhile, about one in seven people entering a hospital need blood. Kick off the year by making a lifesaving donation. Find a blood drive near you [here](#).



On the hunt for college scholarships?

The deadline is 4 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 18, to apply for nearly 200 different scholarships, totaling more than \$1 million in scholarships, available exclusively to Fox Valley area high school, college and graduate students through the Community Foundation of the Fox River Valley. Visit www.cffrv.org to access and submit the application. General policies, the list of materials needed to apply, primary eligibility requirements, types of scholarships available, and location-based opportunities are included with the application.

COVID-19 Update-Get Tested

Because of omicron's quick transmission, it's important to know if you have it. If you are experiencing any symptoms — which include runny nose, headache, fatigue, sneezing or a sore throat — or have been in contact with someone who has the virus, it is advised you get tested. To find a community-based PCR testing site near you, click [here](#). However, a rapid test is better than no test at all. If you have been in contact with someone who has tested positive, or you have even the mildest of symptoms, get the test that best fits your needs.

Roll up your sleeve.

The COVID-19 vaccine continues to be the best defense we have against the virus. Everyone aged five and up is now eligible for their first round, and all adults who received their dose more than six months ago can now receive their booster. Do your part — it's not too late to get your initial round of the vaccine or your booster shot. To find an appointment near you, click [here](#).

Energy Assistance for Winter

Residents are recommended to apply for \$200 million remaining in utility assistance under Gov. JB Pritzker's Help Illinois Families initiative – an expansion of the Low-Income Household Energy Assistance Program under the American Rescue Plan. Designed to support Illinois' most vulnerable families, the program will help cover the cost of heating and energy bills, including expanded benefits provided this year from \$750 to \$1,000, on average per household. To learn more and to fill out a new remote application, visit helpillinoisfamilies.com.

Illinois Rental Assistance

The Illinois Rental Payment Program (ILRPP) is now closed, however, you can check the status of your application submission at <https://ilrpp2.ihda.org/> or return to your application already in-progress. Landlords whose tenants have applied can access an in-process application at <https://ilrpp2.ihda.org/#/display/618d534ead73e501a6a9c486>

If you missed the window to apply for assistance through IHDA, the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) is currently accepting applications for rental assistance. If you are looking for assistance, please contact an IDHS Service Provider Agency in your area at <https://www.illinoisrentalassistance.org/providers>

Grants Available for Community Projects

The Federal Economic Development Administration's Economic Adjustment Assistance program will help hundreds of communities across the nation plan, build, innovate and put people back to work through construction or non-construction projects designed to meet local needs. \$500 million is available to fund an estimated 300 projects. There is a rolling deadline with a suggested submission date of March 31, 2022. Webinars and more information can be found [here](#).

What's Next?

Our office partners with State Representative Maura Hirschauer and co-runs four advisory committees: Environmental and Agriculture, Mental Health, Seniors, and Education. These committees are a limited public forum led by volunteer chairs and seek to create compassionate conversation among the voices of the 25th/49th districts in order to help build our legislative agenda and grow our knowledge in these areas. Our Senior Advisory Committee will meet on January 14th at 10am. Please email seniors.49th@gmail.com if you are interested in attending. Our Mental Health Advisory Committee will meet on January 18th at 6pm. Please email mentalhealth.49th@gmail.com for the meeting information.

My staff and I look forward to hearing from you. I encourage you to reach out to us at 630-326-9319 (English), 630-326-9419 (Spanish) or constituentservices@senatorvilla.com.

Be well!



Karina Villa, MSW
State Senator, 25th District