



Hello friends & neighbors,

As the temperature drops we are wishing you warmth to the start of our holiday season!

Holiday Celebration for our Advisory Committees

On Friday Representative Hirschauer and I celebrated the work of our four Advisory Committees: Environmental and Agriculture, Mental Health, Seniors, and Education! These committees would not be possible without the work of our volunteer chairs. These Advisory Committees are open to all constituents of the 25th District.



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](#).

Small Business Spotlight

Show your families and friends some love this holiday season with a bouquet of flowers! [Swaby Flower Shop & Gifts](#) is a family owned business, serving the St. Charles/Geneva area for over 95 years! They source all of their flowers locally and can provide a quick turnaround for all of their services!

Participate in virtual business workshops

Join the Illinois Department of Transportation's free virtual workshops this month as part of its Building Blocks of Success series for firms interested in participating in the Disadvantaged Business Enterprise program, strengthening their skills and bidding on state projects. Registration is required.

Workshop dates and topics:

Dec. 10, 10 a.m. to noon: Standard Specifications - Forms, Standards and Pay Items
Dec. 14, 10 a.m. to noon: Basic Plan Review
Dec. 16, 10 a.m. to noon: Contract Compliance Documentation

[Registration](#) is required to attend.

Energy assistance for winter

The Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity and the Citizens Utility Board are reminding residents 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

Vulnerable renters and landlords have already received \$505 million of emergency rental assistance, as Illinois leads the nation in distributing this federal funding faster than any other state to help more than 57,000 households. The Illinois Housing Development Authority will open a new round of assistance Dec. 6, and the Illinois Department of Human Services is currently accepting applications for rental assistance. Struggling households can find resources [here](#).

COVID-19 Booster Shot Expanded Eligibility

Following the Food and Drug Administration's decision to open COVID-19 booster shots to all, the Illinois Department of Public Health is recommending anyone 18 years and older get a COVID-19 vaccine booster dose six months after receiving their second Moderna or Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, or two months after receiving the one-dose Johnson & Johnson vaccine. The best protection against the recently emerged Omicron variant is getting fully vaccinated and getting a booster shot. Visit <https://www.vaccines.gov/> to find a safe, free and convenient COVID-19 booster vaccine near you.

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.

On December 10th at 10am our office will be co-hosting our Senior Advisory Committee. To join via Zoom email seniors.49th@gmail.com.

On December 21st at 6pm our office will be co-hosting our Mental Health Advisory Committee. To join via Zoom email mentalhealth.49th@gmail.com.

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