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SPRINGFIELD — From July 1, 2010, to June 30, 2011, small businesses may be eligible to receive \$2,500 in tax credit. Small businesses that create jobs within the given time period may be eligible to receive a tax credit in the state of Illinois.

“Any business that follows the criteria is eligible,” stated Josh Weger, Illinois Department of Commerce and Economic Opportunity’s Southeast region manager.

According to Weger, there is a list of requirements that must be met to be eligible. A business must have 50 or less employees, which counts for all business locations combined. The position must pay no less than \$10 per hour or \$18,200 annually and the position must be sustained for at least one year, although it does not have to be held by the same employee for the duration. A position created must be paid hourly at 35 hours or more a week or on salary at full-time status, but cannot be paid to a partner or private contractor; withholding tax must go to Illinois.

Businesses of any size that hire participants from the “Put Illinois to Work” program are eligible for the one-half of the tax credit as long as they follow all of the same criteria as small businesses except for the actual rule of business size, and instead, follow that the employee hired remains for six months after the date of hire. If the employee remains for 12 months or longer from the date of hire, the other half of the tax credit will be issued.

The purpose of the “Small Business Job Creation Tax Credit,” Public Act 096-0888, is to reverse the trend of high unemployment in Illinois and help stimulate the economy towards recovery by assisting and encouraging small businesses to create local, sustainable new jobs, according to the Small Business Job Creation Tax Credit website. Legislation to expand the tax credit to include businesses of any size that employ worker-trainees from the Put Illinois to Work program was signed by Gov. Pat Quinn on Jan. 17.

The program is capped at \$50 million worth of credits issued, according to the website, and states that small businesses are the backbone of the Illinois economy with 95 percent of Illinois businesses employing 50 or less people.

“Long-term economic stability means making sure that people receive the training they need to compete in the job market. Put Illinois to Work helped thousands of people learn on-the-job skills, and now we are helping them continue using these skills. This tax credit gives employers the tools they need to keep these people working,” states Gov. Quinn in a press release about the tax credit.

Employers who are interested in obtaining the tax credit can find more information and register on the Small Business Job Creation Tax Credit website.

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