

Illinois is facing a **silver tsunami**. Our state is home to more than 120,000 businesses owned by individuals aged 55 and older, many of whom have no exit plan.

Employee ownership is a powerful **growth** strategy and a means of providing value to dedicated employees. Employee ownership can build lasting wealth, keep businesses open and thriving, and strengthen local communities. Employee ownership provides employees with a **financial stake** in their company's success through broad-based structures like Employee Stock Ownership Plans, Worker Cooperatives, and Employee-Owned Trusts.

These models provide employees with a vehicle to share in the **success** of the businesses where they work and offer ownership **opportunities** to workers who may not otherwise have access to them.

Employee ownership can:

- Increase wages, opportunities, and the ability to generate wealth
- Prevent the loss of businesses and jobs when owners transition out of their business
- Grow the labor force
- Foster economic development in local communities

The SBAC supports legislation that will **incentivize employee ownership** by providing:

\$500,000
For feasibility grants

\$200,000
For administration and education

Feasibility grants will be capped at \$20,000 per business.

The **Illinois Center for Employee Ownership** will oversee and administer this program. The **ILCEO** is the state's leading resource for education, guidance, and support on employee ownership. The **ILCEO** serves as the state's central hub for unbiased information about how business owners can transition to employee ownership. It has the expertise, partnerships, and infrastructure necessary to efficiently and effectively deliver this program.

By investing in employee ownership, this legislation will:

- Preserve local businesses, retain jobs, and build worker wealth
- Strengthen communities by keeping businesses rooted locally and fostering economic development across the state
- Expand access to business ownership for the Illinois labor force