



# **2022 Robust Retail Citywide Grant Request for Applications (RFA)**

**Application Submission Period: April 25, 2022 through June 8, 2022**

**Issued by the Department of Small & Local Business Development.**

**Updated: 5/2/2022**

**The final deadline to apply is June 8, 2022 at 2 pm eastern.  
No Exceptions.**

*Look for paperwork boot camps & grant information sessions at  
<http://bit.ly/DSLBDeventbrite>. Send all questions in writing to [DCMainStreets@dc.gov](mailto:DCMainStreets@dc.gov).*

## **How to use this document to guide your application process.**

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (“DSLBD” or “Agency”) has issued this Request for Applications (RFA) with a full set of instructions for applicants to understand how to complete the application for the 2022 Robust Retail Citywide Grant. **All applicants are encouraged to read this RFA in its entirety before beginning the application.**

*DSLBD will hold an information session and a paperwork boot camp during the grant application period as advertised via the DSLBD Eventbrite at: <http://bit.ly/DSLBDEventbrite>. These sessions will be recorded and made available to all applicants.*

*All other questions will be answered via email only by DSLBD staff via the [DCMainStreets@dc.gov](mailto:DCMainStreets@dc.gov) email address. Please submit all questions not asked in an information session to [DCMainStreets@dc.gov](mailto:DCMainStreets@dc.gov).*

**The RFA is divided into the following sections for ease of use.**

### **1. Objectives**

What DSLBD seeks to accomplish through the grant.

### **2. On-line Application**

Where eligible businesses can submit an application online.

### **3. Deadlines**

The final deadline, pre-eligibility check deadlines, and the question deadline.

### **4. Eligibility Requirements & Attestations**

What businesses are eligible to apply & the needed paperwork.

### **5. Allowed and Disallowed Uses of Funds**

How the funds can & cannot be spent.

### **6. Selection Process**

How DSLBD decides awardees.

### **7. Budget Reporting Requirements**

Required Expense Information

### **8. Award Information**

What happens if you are awarded a grant.

### **9. Reservations**

DSLBD legal reservations in addition to those listed above.

# 1. Objective

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is excited to announce that the agency will be accepting applications for the **2022 Robust Retail Citywide grant(s) starting April 25, 2022 and closing June 8, 2022.**

A robust retail sector is critical to maintaining the vibrancy of DC neighborhoods, but due to market realities of the past year, retail businesses are under threat of business decline and closure. Thus the Robust Retail Citywide grant(s) support existing DC-based retail businesses maintaining operations and viability during the current small business crisis.

DSLBD intends to award up to \$7,500 per business to 78 businesses from the total \$588,000 in available funding for Fiscal Year 2022. This grant will be operated as a reimbursement grant, awarded via lottery, open to DC retail businesses that have met all eligibility requirements and submit by the final deadline. Businesses awarded a Robust Retail Citywide grant in FY2021 are not eligible to apply.

# 2. Online Application

**Apply here:**

<https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/2022RobustRetailCitywideGrant>

Only applications submitted through the online system, Zoom Grants, will be accepted and scored. No application materials will be accepted outside of the application system or after the grant deadline.

*Zoom Grants is a third-party provider that offers customer assistance for login issues, issues with saving your application, and other IT related issues for your application. Zoom Grants provides technical support Monday – Friday from 10am-7pm eastern time. Reach out to Zoom Grants at any time during the application period if you have technical difficulties by emailing [Questions@ZoomGrants.com](mailto:Questions@ZoomGrants.com).*

If a business submits multiple applications, only the last submitted application will be considered.

We recommend submitting your application at least 24-48 hours before the final deadline to ensure that you are able to resolve any technical difficulties if they arise. DSLBD will not accept late applications for any reason.

# 3. Deadlines

There are three deadlines that applicants should monitor.

- **Eligibility Pre-review:** Applicants who complete eligibility documentation by or before May 16, 2022 at 2pm will receive a courtesy review and determination of their eligibility on a rolling basis.

- **Questions Deadline:** The last date to ask DSLBD staff questions about the grant application is June 6, 2022 at 2pm. Questions asked after this time cannot be guaranteed a response prior to application deadline.
- **Final deadline: The final application submission deadline is June 8, 2022 by 2 pm eastern. No Exceptions.**

## 4. Eligibility Requirements & Attestations

Only for-profit, customer-facing, brick and mortar small retail businesses that are independently owned, operated and controlled, open and operating, with 25 or fewer employees and a licensed location in DC are eligible for Robust Retail Citywide Grants. Businesses that were awarded a Robust Retail Grant in FY2021 are not eligible for the FY2022 round. ***Professional service industry, home-based, and non-profit businesses are not eligible for this grant opportunity.***

To be eligible, applications must be submitted by the business owner. Businesses must submit all required documentation in advance of an application being entered into the lottery for a single eligible business with a valid business license. All documentation is subject to verification.

- Unverifiable information will result in the application being disqualified.
- Applications from businesses that have demonstrably failed to meet reporting requirements on previous DC Government and DSLBD grants will be deemed ineligible.
- Failure to meet any requirement of the application and eligibility criteria by the application deadline will result in the application being disqualified as ineligible.
- Failure to honestly and accurately represent the factual truth in the attestations may result in being disqualified, forfeiture of an awarded grant, or greater penalties as appropriate.

Eligibility Documentation Checklist	
<b>Business Formalized</b>	Federal Employment Identification Number (FEIN) or (EIN)
<b>Clean Hands Compliant</b>	Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR) issued clean hands certificate in the name of the business, under the business EIN, verifiable against the OTR public database in MyTax.DC.Gov. ( <a href="https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands">https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands</a> ). The document must be dated October 1, 2021 or later.
<b>Business Licensing Compliant</b>	Department of Consumer & Regulatory Affairs (DCRA) issued valid Business License Number for the DC Retail Location verifiable against DCRA’s business license database ( <a href="https://dcra.dc.gov/service/verify-basic-business-license">https://dcra.dc.gov/service/verify-basic-business-license</a> ) or upload of alternative licensure if a DCRA Basic Business License is not required (i.e. childcare, barbershops, salons).
<b>Prepared for Tax Reporting</b>	Current Internal Revenue Service (IRS) W-9 <a href="https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf">https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf</a>

In addition to providing eligibility documentation, applicants must make several attestations regarding the applicant business. It is important that applicants answer these attestations accurately and honestly, as the owner applicant is making a legal claim to the truth and validity of these statements.

<b>Attestation Check List</b>	
<b>Previous 2021 Award</b>	Attest that the business <u>did not</u> receive a 2021 Robust Retail Citywide Award.
<b>Business Size</b>	Attest the business is small and independently owned, with 25 or fewer full time employees or full time equivalents (FTE)s.
<b>Business Operation</b>	Attest that the business is open and operating. ( <i>Businesses that are not open AND operating are not eligible.</i> )
<b>Retail Business</b>	Attest that the business is a retail location.
<b>Applicant is Owner</b>	Attest that the applicant is the business owner.
<b>Independently Owned and Operated</b>	Attest that the business is independently owned, operated, and controlled. Meaning that the business manages and controls its day-to-day operations without being subject to control, restriction, modification, or limitation by another business enterprise(s) or a not-for-profit business(es) that has or may have an ownership and/or financial interest in the business.
<b>Qualified, Reimbursable Expenses</b>	Attest the business will be able to provide full receipts and documentation of \$7,500 of qualified business expenditures clearly made between October 1, 2021 and June 8, 2022.
<b>No Double Dipping</b>	Attest that the business has not been reimbursed for these receipts by another DC Government or other business grant, and if awarded will not request reimbursement for these same expenses from another grant source.
<b>Accountability</b>	Attest that the business has completed all reporting requirements for DSBLD and DC Government grants previously received and closed in the last 2 years. ( <i>Failure to complete reporting for previous DSLBD direct to small business grant rounds, including previous Robust Retail grants, will result in disqualification from this grant round.</i> )
<b>Can Receive Electronic Funds</b>	Attest that the business has a business bank account that can receive electronic funds transfer if awarded the grant.
<b>Full Accuracy</b>	Attest that all information provided in the application is true and accurate.

## 5. Allowed and Disallowed Uses of Funds

All expenditures reimbursed by this grant must have occurred between October 1, 2021 and June 8, 2022, the period of performance for this grant. DSLBD will consider uses that support your retail business. Grant funds have several allowed uses and several disallowed uses.

DSLBD will explicitly allow grant funds for the reimbursement the business' expenses that cover the following:

1. Employee Wages and Salaries
2. Insurance
3. Rent
4. Utilities
5. Inventory
6. Cleaning Supplies
7. New Delivery or Online Costs
8. Taxes, Debt Service

DSLBD will consider allowing other cost categories proposed by a business and will make a determination in its sole discretion.

DSLBD will not allow the use of the grant funds for reimbursing disallowed costs which include, but are not limited to, the following: :

1. Expenses incurred before October 1, 2021 or after June 8, 2022.
2. Expenses that are reimbursed by a different grant from DC Government.
3. Any interior or exterior construction not permitted by DC Code.
4. Assistance to bring legal charges against or to lobby or influence the District of Columbia government.
5. Any undocumented expense.

## 6. Selection Process

### A. Application Acceptance or Rejection

Following the closing of the application deadline(s), DSLBD will disqualify applications that do not comply with the instructions in the RFA. The Agency reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the Agency determines it is in the best interest of the Agency to do so. The Agency shall notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. The Agency may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any applicable federal regulation or requirement.

### B. Selection Criteria and Review Process

DSLBD intends to select grant recipients through a lottery process. The grants will be evenly split across all 8 DC Wards for 8 grants in each Ward. The remaining eligible grants will be entered into a citywide pool of all applicants. If there are insufficient eligible applicants from any Ward, any remaining grants will be awarded from a citywide pool of all applications. Eligible applications will be

assigned a random number. DSLBD will use a random number generator to develop an ordered list of selected recipients. The Director of DSLBD will make the final determination and approval of grant awards.

## 7. Budget Reporting Requirements

Applicants are required to submit proof of all expenses to be reimbursed within 5 days of Notice of Grant Award. DSLBD will reconcile the receipt and expenditure documentation. If \$7,500 of allowable, reimbursable expenses cannot be reconciled from the provided documentation, the grant award may be forfeit.

### Budget Requirements:

1. Proof of expenditures may be submitted in the form of dated receipts, dated payroll documentation, or bank/credit card statements. *Non-responsive information (expenses for which the business is not requesting reimbursement, balances, overdue notices) on bank/credit card statements may be redacted to protect the privacy of the business and is encouraged.*
2. All uploaded receipts and documentation must be clearly legible.
3. Receipts under \$500 must be batched into files of \$500 or more, with an included list of each receipt.
4. All uploads must be accurately reflected in the budget chart.
5. All expenses must be expenses for the business location applying for the grant.

## 8. Award Information

Grant notification announcements of selected awards will be made on or around June 13, 2022.

Selected grantees will need to complete reimbursement expenditure reporting for \$7,500 of qualified business expenses from October 1 – June 8, 2022 and sign a grant agreement with DSLBD. The agency anticipates signing grant agreements between DSLBD and the grantees between June 13, 2022 and June 17, 2022. If agreements are unable to be executed within 5 business days of grant award notification, for any reason, then the grant may be forfeit. The grant agreement will require additional documentation and reporting. This will include electronic fund transfer information (an ACH form) for the business bank account and final report about how the grant benefited the business.

Grantees are required to prepare a final report providing a description of the impacts of the grant.

Terms of disbursement shall be determined after applicants are selected for grant award. Grants will be disbursed in one sum. DC Government pays all invoices within thirty (30) days of receipt of invoice. **This timeline does not start until after an executed grant agreement is in place, a recipient is fully registered to receive payment, and invoice has been submitted, and the invoice is approved.**

DSLBD will notify successful applicants of its selection decision by email and send a Notice of Grant Award to the selected grant recipients. This will include additional post-award instructions.

Additional information may be required as part of a final grant agreement. An awardee that cannot provide these and other requested materials within 5 business days of notification of grant award may be disqualified and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant.

## 9. Reservations

This section includes reservations that DSLBD makes in releasing this RFA.

### A. Application Acceptance

Applications must be made through the online portal. DSLBD will not accept applications submitted via hand delivery, email, mail, or courier service. DSLBD will not review late submissions or incomplete applications.

### B. Notice of Funding Availability

DSLBD published the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in the DC Register and the OPGS Funding Alert. The NOFA is available at [http://bit.ly/dslbd\\_grants](http://bit.ly/dslbd_grants).

### C. Reservations

Funding for any grant award is contingent on continued grantor funding.

Publication of Request for Applications does not commit DSLBD to make any awards.

DSLBD reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of the NOFA or RFA, or to rescind the NOFA or RFA. DSLBD will post addenda or amendments in the online application (see below). Applicants are responsible to review and adhere to any RFA addenda or amendments. Funding for this award is contingent on continued funding from the grantor. The RFA does not commit the Agency to make an award.

DSLBD may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to its own grant making rule(s) or any DSLBD federal regulation or requirement.

DSLBD reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if DSLBD determines that it is in the best interest of the District to do so.

DSLBD shall not be liable for any costs incurred by an applicant in the preparation of one or more grant applications for this Program. The applicant understands and agrees that all costs incurred in developing and preparing any grant application shall be the applicant's sole responsibility.

DSLBD may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in a grant application.



DSLBD staff serve as their own reference in evaluating applications. Grant decisions will reflect applicants' performance in managing previous grants.

DSLBD may enter into negotiations with an awardee and adopt a firm funding amount or other revision of the awardee's proposal that may result from the negotiations.

In the event of a conflict between the terms and conditions of the grant application and any applicable federal or local law or regulation, or any ambiguity related thereto, then the provisions of the applicable law or regulation shall control and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance.