

# 2022 Dream Pitch Program

## Official Application Instructions

Last Updated: January 31, 2022

### 1. Objective

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is excited to announce that we will be accepting applications for the **2022 Dream Pitch program**, a cohort-based training for microbusinesses in Wards 7 and 8 **starting February 1, 2022**.

Eligible microbusinesses must have **fewer than five (5) employees**, the business must be **in Ward 7 or 8** and be a **Ward 7 or 8 resident owning 51% or more** of the of the business. *This program is only for for-profit businesses.*

Businesses accepted into this competitive program will go through 8 weeks of training to help the business to grow and become sustainable in the future. Every participant business will receive business development support to include gaining experience with financial projections, marketing & branding, creating your business pitch and ongoing mentorship opportunities.

Participants who complete all 8 weeks of the Dream Pitch program will be eligible to compete in the **Dream Pitch Competition**. The pitch competition is an opportunity for participants to highlight their businesses and knowledge gained through the program. Participants will receive feedback from judges and resource partners resulting in every participant receiving a pitch prize award of \$2000 to \$7500 in addition to in-kind services.

Look for program and application information sessions at <http://bit.ly/DSLBDeventbrite>. Outside of an information session, **send all questions in writing to [Inno.ED@dc.gov](mailto:Inno.ED@dc.gov)**. *No phone calls will be accepted.*

Questions on the RFA? Email [Inno.ED@dc.gov](mailto:Inno.ED@dc.gov)

Technical issues with Zoom Grants? Email [questions@zoomgrants.com](mailto:questions@zoomgrants.com)

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## 2. Online Application

Apply at <https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/DreamPitch2022>

## 3. Deadlines

There are three deadlines that applicants should monitor.

- **Eligibility Pre-Review:** Applicants who complete eligibility documentation by or before **March 11, 2022**, will receive a courtesy review and determination on their eligibility on a rolling basis.
- **Question Deadline:** The last date to ask questions about the grant application is **March 29, 2022, 2pm EST**. Questions asked after this time cannot be guaranteed a response prior to the application deadline.
- **Final Deadline:** The final deadline is **April 1, 2022, at 2pm EST. No Exceptions**

## 4. Eligibility Requirements

Only microbusinesses with fewer than five (5) employees, located in Ward 7 or 8, and with Ward 7 or 8 residents maintaining ownership of 51% or more of the of the business are eligible for funding. Applicants must be the business owner. *Third party support may be added to the application but cannot apply on behalf of a business.* **Businesses that have received Dream Grant funding in 2021 are not eligible for the Dream Pitch 2022 Program.**

DSLBD is currently accepting applications for both the Dream Pitch 2022 and WeAspire 2022 Programs. Eligible businesses may apply for both programs but will only be selected to participate in one program in 2022. Learn more about the WeAspire 2022 Program and eligibility requirements here: <https://dslbd.dc.gov/page/weaspire-2022>

Required documentation will demonstrate:

- Proof of Residency in Ward 7 or 8
- Business Location
- Attest to Majority Ownership

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- Attest to Business Size
- Attest to meeting vaccination requirements

Applicants who do not meet eligibility requirements will not be evaluated or placed in the training and pitch program. All documents and attestations showing eligibility must be submitted through the online Zoom Grants application system. False attestations may result in program forfeiture, or other penalties as appropriate.

## Required Documents and Attestations for Eligibility

| Required Items  | Description  |
|---|--|
| 1. Valid Photo ID for the Ward 7 & 8 residents who are majority owners of the business.       | DC Driver's License, DC Non-Driver Identification Card, passport (will not accept other State IDs)   |
| 2. Proof of Ward 7 or 8 residency dated February 1, 2022 or later                             | Utility bill, bank statement, Government check, formal Government letter verifying residency, or paycheck (Will not accept a deed or water bill)   |
| 3. Attest to majority ownership of the business being a Ward 7 or 8 resident.                 | Attestation within Zoom Grants about majority ownership of the business. (Any applicant shown to have falsely attested may forfeit the program benefits and funding.)  |
| 4. Attest to the business having 5 (five) or fewer full-time employees (FTEs).                | Attestation within Zoom Grants about FTE staffing (Any applicant shown to have falsely attested may forfeit the program benefits and funding.)   |
| 5. Attest to the applicant being able to meet vaccination requirements before program starts. | Attestation within Zoom Grants about Pitch applicants being able to demonstrate verified proof of Covid-19 vaccination and as applicable boosters by the start date of program classes (April or May of 2022). |

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## 5. Restrictions on allowable uses of funds

Pitch prize funds will be required to be used on business expenses for the applicant business.

## 6. Selection Process

DSLBD will select program participants through a competitive application process. A review panel may be composed of agency partners, DC Government employees, and community partners & members to review eligible applications received by the submission deadline.

The DSLBD program team will review the panel reviewers' recommendations and the Director of DSLBD will make the final determination of program participants.

The following criteria will be used to evaluate all eligible applications.

- Clear benefit for Dream Pitch program participation & funding-(25%)
- Business Goals & Growth Potential-(50%)
- Commitment to the Business-(25%)

## 7. Program Application Questions

The application is broken into four sections, which correspond directly to the scoring criteria listed in section 6 of this document.

### A. Clear Benefit for Dream Pitch program participation & funding

1. Tell us about your business- What does your business do, how long have you owned it, and who runs it day to day?
2. Tell us about your customers and describe the market for your goods or services.

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3. What are the biggest challenges and needs your business faces right now and how will this program help you to overcome them?
4. Why do you want to participate in this program?

## **B. Business Goals & Growth Potential**

1. What is the dream for your business? (This is the vision for the business in the next year or beyond)
2. How do you plan to create awareness and promote your business?
3. What impact would mentorship, marketing, and accounting support have on the business?
4. How will you seek to grow the business as a result of this program? (i.e., pivot, find new customers, or usage of funding)

## **C. Commitment to the Business**

1. Tell us the why behind the business. How did the business come to be?
2. What preparation went into starting the business?
3. Please upload one visual document about your business and explain it here.

## **8. Pitch Program Acceptance Information**

Notification of selected Dream Pitch Program participants will be made before or on June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. Selected program participants will be required to submit and/ or confirm the following before participation in the program and/or in the final pitch and to be eligible to receive any funds:

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- **Employment Identification Number (EIN)**
  - Available for free at IRS.gov
- **Proof of Majority Ownership**
  - Corporate registration documents demonstrating ownership, majority ownership, or attestation of sole proprietorship (DBA or Trade Name registration if applicable for sole proprietorship)
- **Valid DC Business License Number**
  - Must be searchable in the DCRA Business License Look Up or provide proof of alternative licensure
- **Business Bank Account**
  - Businesses should have bank accounts separate from personal accounts.
- **Vaccination Requirement**
  - Business owner participating in Dream Pitch will need to show proof of Covid-19 vaccination and as applicable booster shots.

All selected participants in addition to submitting and or/confirming above listed items must maintain active participation in the 8-week program and completion of any additional pitch prep sessions. Only individual businesses that meet these requirements will be allowed to pitch in the final Dream Pitch 2022. Only individuals and businesses that participate in the pitch will be eligible to receive pitch funding.

## 9. Reservations

This section includes reservation that DSLBD makes in releasing these applications rules.

### 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 unless accepted by DSLBD due to extenuating

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circumstances. DSLBD will not review late submissions or incomplete applications.

## B. Reservations

Funding for any pitch prize is contingent on continued funding available for this program.

Publication of these Official Rules does not commit DSLBD to make any funding prize awards.

DSLBD reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of the Official Rules, or to rescind the Official Rules. DSLBD will post addenda or amendments in the online application (see below). Applicants are responsible to review and adhere to any Official Rules addenda or amendments. Funding for pitch prizes is contingent on continued funding from the for this program. The Official Rules do not commit the Agency to make any funding awards.

DSLBD may suspend or terminate an outstanding Official Rules pursuant to its own authority 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 applications for this Program. The applicant understands and agrees that all costs incurred in developing and preparing any application shall be the applicant's sole responsibility.

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

DSLBD serves as their own reference in evaluating applications.

DSLBD may enter into negotiations with a program participant and adopt revisions of the participant's application that may result from the negotiations.

In the event of a conflict between the terms and conditions of the program 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.