

# 2024 Dream Pitch Program

## Official Application Instructions & Program Details

Last Updated: January 25, 2024

The Department of Small and Local Business Development presents

# DREAM PITCH

PROGRAM

**APPLY BY MARCH 1, 2024**

Wards 7 and 8 resident-owned microbusinesses could be eligible to receive up to \$2,000-\$7,500 in awards! Microbusinesses accepted into this competitive program will receive business development training in 4 areas:

- Marketing & Branding
- Mentorship
- Business Pitch
- Financial Projections & Accounting

DSLBD.DC.GOV/DREAMPITCH

DSLBD  
GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA  
MURIEL BOWSER, MAYOR

## Overview

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is excited to announce that we will be accepting applications for the **2024 Dream Pitch Program**, starting *January 26, 2024*.

The Dream Pitch Program is a cohort-based training program for microbusinesses in Ward 7 and 8 culminating into the **Dream Pitch Competition**. The Dream Pitch Competition is an opportunity for participants to pitch their business to a panel of judges, showcasing the knowledge gained through the program resulting in a pitch award between **\$2000 to \$7500**. Microbusinesses accepted into this competitive program will receive business development training in across several topic areas from local service provider selected through the Business to Business grant program, including:

- Business Basics & Pitch Preparation
- Financial Projections and Financial Management
- Marketing & Branding
- Peer Mentorship

Class and program schedules will be finalized around April 2024 when all program service providers are finalized with some required and some optional classes. Applicants will be asked to complete a survey about general availability in their applications for programming anticipated for April-June/July 2024.



## Program Eligibility

Program eligible microbusinesses must have **fewer than five (5) employees**, the business must be **located** in Ward 7 or 8 and the **applicant must be a Ward 7 or 8 resident owning 51% or more of the business**. *This program is only for For-Profit businesses.* Applicants and program/pitch participants must be the majority business owner. Multiple participants per business are not accepted. **Participants in the 2023 Dream Pitch Program who received a pitch award and/or selected participants in the 2024 Aspire Incubator Program are not eligible to participate to Dream Pitch this year.**

DSLBD will be accepting applications in Winter/Spring 2024 for both the Dream Pitch 2024 and 2024 Aspire Incubator programs. Eligible businesses may apply for both programs but will only be selected to participate in one program in 2024. To learn more about the Aspire Incubator program and eligibility requirements, visit <https://dslbd.dc.gov>.

## How to Apply

Submit applications here: <https://survey.alchemer.com/s3/7679211/2024-Dream-Pitch-Program>. All application and supporting documents must be submitted in the online application system. Incomplete applications may be rejected as incomplete.

## Application Deadlines

Applications must be submitted by **March 1, 2024 at 2pm eastern. No Exceptions.**

There are other deadlines that applicants should monitor.

## Program Application Deadlines

1st PRE-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW	2ND PRE-ELIGIBILITY REVIEW	QUESTIONS	FINAL
FEBRUARY 9TH 2 pm eastern	FEBRUARY 23TH 2 pm eastern	FEBRUARY 27 2 pm eastern	MARCH 1st 2 pm eastern

**Eligibility Pre-Review:** Applicants who complete eligibility documentation requirements by or before pre-eligibility review deadlines, will receive a courtesy review and determination of their eligibility on a rolling basis.

## Information Sessions

**Information Sessions:** DSLBD will offer multiple information sessions to support applicants in understanding these Official Instructions and providing an opportunity to ask questions live. Register directly for an information session here: <https://bit.ly/DreamPitch2024QA>.

**Questions:** All questions must be asked by the question deadline on February 27, 2024 at 2 pm eastern. Questions asked after the deadline cannot be guaranteed a response prior to the application deadline. All questions must be emailed to [Inno.ED@dc.gov](mailto:Inno.ED@dc.gov) or asked in an information or Q&A session. **No phone calls accepted.**

## Required Eligibility Documents

Program eligible microbusinesses must have **fewer than five (5) employees**, the business must be **located** in Ward 7 or 8 and the **applicant must be a Ward 7 or 8 resident owning 51% or more of the business**. Required eligibility documents must be submitted in the online application system.

Required documentation will demonstrate:

- Identity of the Majority Owner
- Proof of Residency in Ward 7 or 8
- Business Location or Planned Location in Ward 7 or 8
- Proof of business licensure (for existing businesses) OR participation in a licensing support session (for not yet licensed businesses)
- Proof of Majority Ownership
- Business Size Attestation

For accepted applicants incited to join the program, the following documentation will be required to join the 2024 cohort:

- An IRS W9 form: we will provide one to be completed after acceptance
- Confirmation of Federal Employment Identification Number
- Bank account details to be provided securely to the payment provider (to receive pitch prize payments)
- Proof of business licensure (for existing businesses)
- Other documentation about the use of pitch prize funds as may be required by the payment provider or DSLBD
- Final confirmation of schedule availability for the finalized schedule

All information, documents, and attestations must be submitted into the online system in the eligibility section for review. Applicants who do not meet eligibility requirements will not be evaluated. If an applicant submits multiple applications, DSLBD will only review the last submitted application. False information may result in program forfeiture.

Use the checklist below to ensure that you have all of the required information and documents prior to completing or submitting an application. **Please note that requirements have been broken down into two categories:**

- **Licensed Business**
- **Not Yet Licensed.**

View all requirements based on your business status at the time of application.



REQUIRED ITEMS	LICENSED BUSINESS	NOT YET LICENSED
Photo ID	✓	✓
Proof of Residency	✓	✓
Valid DC Business License	✓	✗
Attend a License Support Session	✗	✓
Proof of Majority Ownership	✓	✗
Employment Identification Number (EIN)	✓	✓
Business Bank Account	✗	✗
Business Size Attestation	✓	✓
Majority Ownership Ward 7 or 8 Resident Attestation	✗	✓

**Learn more about each required item below:**

## Valid Photo ID

DESCRIPTION	Valid photo ID for the majority owner
APPROVED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● DC issued Driver's License, OR</li><li>● DC issued Non-Driver Identification Card, OR</li><li>● Passport</li></ul>
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● ID must be active and not expired</li><li>● ID from states other than DC are not accepted</li></ul>

## Proof of Residency

DESCRIPTION	Documentation to prove applicant's residency in DC Ward 7 or Ward 8
APPROVED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Utility Bill</li><li>● Bank Statement</li><li>● Paystub</li><li>● Formal Government letter verifying residency</li></ul>
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Document must be dated on or after December 1, 2023</li><li>● Deed, Lease Agreement, and Water Bill are not accepted documents</li><li>● The applicant business owner's name, their address, and the document date must appear on the document</li><li>● Utilize the Master Address Repository system to verify the address ward location <a href="https://developers.data.dc.gov/marviewer/home">https://developers.data.dc.gov/marviewer/home</a></li></ul>

## Valid DC Business License

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	PDF/Photo of the Business License issued by the Department of Licensing and Consumer Protection (DLCP) or appropriate licensing authority
<b>APPROVED DOCUMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Basic Business License (BBL), OR</li> <li>● Professional Business License that precludes a BBL, OR</li> <li>● Alternative Business License (if applicable)</li> </ul>
<b>NOTES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Must be searchable in the DLCP Business License database if a BBL, OR must submit a copy of professional or alternative licensure</li> <li>● License must be in Active status</li> <li>● Address on the business license must be located in Ward 7 or 8</li> <li>● If a BBL is not required for the business type, DSLBD will verify that a BBL is not required with DLCP</li> <li>● <i>If your business is not licensed, then attend a license support session and see the requirement box below</i></li> </ul>

## License Support Session

<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	Attend one virtual license support session in partnership with the DLCP Small Business Resource Center (SBRC) to learn the more about the licensing process if your business is not licensed.
<b>APPROVED DOCUMENTS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Copy of attendance confirmation email received from DSLBD OR</li> <li>● Copy of attendance confirmation email received from DLCP SBRC</li> </ul>
<b>NOTES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Group sessions are scheduled for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>February 6, 2024 at 2 pm</b></li> <li>○ <b>February 26, 2024 at 2 pm</b></li> <li>○ Register for either session here: <a href="https://bit.ly/2024SBRC">https://bit.ly/2024SBRC</a>.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Individual meetings with an SBRC team member during the application period are also accepted. You can schedule to meet with an SBRC representative in two ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Small Biz Assist at the MLK Library two Wednesdays in February: <a href="https://dslbd.dc.gov/smallbizassist">https://dslbd.dc.gov/smallbizassist</a></li> <li>○ SBRC Meeting Schedule: <a href="https://dlcpsbrc.ecenterdirect.com/events?reset=1">https://dlcpsbrc.ecenterdirect.com/events?reset=1</a></li> </ul> </li> </ul>

## Proof of Majority Ownership

DESCRIPTION	Document that displays the majority owner the business entity is the applicant.
APPROVED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Articles of Incorporation that demonstrate ownership, OR</li><li>● Operating Agreement that demonstrate, OR</li><li>● Trade name registration (accepted for sole-proprietors only)</li></ul>
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● For licensed businesses only, unlicensed businesses will attest that they are intending to be the majority owner</li><li>● The majority owner information must be clear and visible</li><li>● Must have a DLCP Corporations file number for an active DC Corporation</li></ul>

## Employee Identification Number (EIN)

DESCRIPTION	An EIN also known as a Federal Tax Identification Number, is used to identify a business entity.
APPROVED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Enter the EIN in the system</li></ul>
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Available for <b>free</b> at <a href="http://www.irs.gov">www.irs.gov</a></li><li>● <i>Accepted applicants will be asked to provide a verification letter</i></li></ul>

## Business Bank Account

DESCRIPTION	Banking account for the business
APPROVED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Voided Check (Must have the business name and address)</li><li>● Direct Deposit Form</li><li>● Bank Statement</li></ul>
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● The account should not be a personal account</li><li>● The account needs to have the capacity to receive direct deposits</li><li>● <i>Will be collected for accepted applicants closer to pitch prize payment dates by DSLBD or the payor entity</i></li></ul>



## Business Size Attestation

DESCRIPTION	Attestation within the online system about Full-time Employees (FTE) staffing of fewer than 5 FTEs.
APPROVED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Acknowledge the statement in the system with entering the applicant's full name.</li></ul>
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● No uploads required</li><li>● Applicants shown to have falsely attested may forfeit participation in the program</li></ul>

## Majority Ownership Attestation

DESCRIPTION	Attestation within the online system about majority ownership of the business.
APPROVED DOCUMENTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Acknowledge the statement in the system with entering your full name.</li></ul>
NOTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● No upload required</li><li>● Applicants shown to have falsely attested may forfeit participation in the program</li></ul>

## Selection Process

DSLBD will select program participants through a competitive application process. A review panel will be put together consisting of DC Government employees who review all **ELIGIBLE** applications received by the submission deadline of **March 1, 2024 at 2pm**.

The program team will review the panel 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 the Dream Pitch program participation (25%)
- Business Goals & Growth Potential (50%)
- Commitment to the Business (25%)



## Competitive Application Questions

The application is broken down into three sections and corresponds directly to the scoring criteria listed in the *Selection Process* section of this document.

### ***Clear Benefit for Dream Pitch program participation***

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. Who are your customers and describe the market for your goods and services?
3. What are the biggest challenges and needs of your business right now and how will this program help you overcome them?
4. Why do you want to participate in this program? (Video upload optional)

### ***Business Goals & Growth Potential***

1. What is the dream for your business? (Vision for the business in the next year or beyond)
2. What challenges have you faced with accessing business capital, marketing, business financial management?
3. If you received the top pitch prize of \$7500, how would you use it to grow the business?

## ***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?

## ***Letter of Support***

- Include one short letter or video from someone who is supportive of your business development journey. This can be from any person in your life who is supportive of you developing a business.

## **Program Acceptance Details**

Notification of selected program participants will be made **on or around April 5-15, 2024**. Selected program participants will be required to attend the following before participation into the program:



### **Program On-boarding Session**

PARTICIPANTS MUST JOIN AN IN-PERSON  
SESSION TO LEARN PROGRAM AND PITCH  
COMPETITION DETAILS AND EXPECTATIONS AND  
NETWORK WITH OTHER PROGRAM  
PARTICIPANTS

All selected program participants in addition to attending the the Program On-boarding session must do the following to participate and pitch in the **Dream Pitch Competition**:

- ☐ ***Maintain active participation in the full program.*** Participants are required to attend regular program activities such as classes and cohort activities. The program is a hybrid model, some sessions will be virtual and others in-person. Absences must be approved by reaching out to the designated attendance manager, and an 85% attendance rate of required activities is required to be eligible to pitch.
- ☐ ***Attend Pitch Prep Sessions.*** Additional opportunities will be made available to support participants in preparing for the Pitch Competition. Opportunities will include pitch run through, and slide deck development.

Only participants that complete the requirements listed above will be allowed to participate and pitch in the Dream Pitch Competition.

## Dream Pitch Competition

The Dream Pitch Competition is an opportunity for participants to pitch their business to a panel of judges, showcasing the knowledge gained through the program resulting in a pitch award between **\$2000 to \$7500**. Participants will prepare a pitch deck and will have 5 minutes to pitch to the panel of judges who will evaluate the pitch on a scoring rubric and provide feedback.

For the competition, participating businesses will pitch against other participant businesses located in their respective ward. For example, if the business is located in Ward 8 you will participate in the competition against all of the Ward 8 participant businesses.

Participant businesses must meet the following requirements to be eligible to receive a pitch prize award:

- ***Pitch and participate in the Dream Pitch Competition.*** All participants must pitch in the competition for their respective ward. Participants must participate in all required program activities with an 85% percent attendance rate or better with only excused absences from required activities.
- ***Have an Active and Valid Business License.*** Participants will have until **the close of required class programming (date to be announced)** of the program to submit proof of a business license. If a participant business is unable to submit proof by the the announced deadline deadline but:
  - Maintains active participation in the full program, with at least an 85% attendance rate rate with absences excused.
  - Participates and pitch in the pitch competition.

That business is **only eligible** for a pitch prize award of \$2000 and ineligible to participate in the battle of the wards pitch competition.

Any participating business that **does not participate and pitch** in the pitch competition is not eligible to receive a pitch prize award even if other requirements are completed.

## Battle of the Wards Pitch Competition

The Battle of the Wards Competition is an opportunity for the top performing businesses in each of the wards to battle it out winner the honor of the 2024 top performing ward. The 5 businesses with the highest performance in each ward-based pitch will represent for their ward in the Battle of the Wards Pitch competition.





## Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds

Pitch prize award funds must be used on business expenses.

## Reservations

This section included reservations that DSLBD makes in releasing application rules.

### A. Application Acceptance

Applications must be made through the online portal. DLSBD will not accept applications submitted via hand delivery, email, mail, or courier service unless accepted by DSLBD due to extenuating circumstances. DLSBD will not review late submissions or incomplete applications.

### B. Reservations

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

Publication of these 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 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 cost 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 negotiations.

Applicants participating in the Dream Pitch program accept that all pitch competitions will be photographed and video recorded.

Applicants participating in the program accept that they must complete 85% or more of all required program classes and activities to be eligible to participate in the ward-based pitch.

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.