



FISCAL YEAR 2026

CAPACITY BUILDING GRANT

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS ADDENDUM #1

Date of Addendum: March 3, 2026

PUBLIC NOTICE

The Fiscal Year 2026 Capacity Building Grant Request for Applications (“RFA”) is modified as set forth in this Addendum. The original RFA documents and any previously issued addenda remain in full force and effect, except as modified by this Addendum, which is hereby made part of the RFA. Applicants shall take this Addendum into consideration when preparing and submitting the relevant Application

Page	Section	Description of Change
1	Cover Page	Extend grant application deadline from March 4, 2026 at 2:00 pm to March 4, 2026 at 10:00 pm.
3	Section 2: Online Application & Deadline	Extend grant application deadline from March 4, 2026 at 2:00 pm to March 4, 2026 at 10:00 pm.



Fiscal Year 2026 Capacity Building Grant Program Request for Applications

February 4, 2:00pm ET through March 4, 2026, ~~2:00 pm~~ 10:00 pm¹ ET

How to use this document to guide your application process:

This Request for Applications (RFA), along with a corresponding Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA), constitutes the full set of instructions for applicants. **All applicants are required to read the entire RFA and NOFA before applying.**

The sections of the RFA are outlined below:

- [1. Objective](#)—What DSLBD seeks to accomplish through the grant
- [2. Online Application Deadline](#)—Where and when eligible businesses must apply
- [3. Eligibility & Documentation](#)—Who can apply, and what documentation is required
- [4. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds](#)—How funds can be spent
- [5. Competitive Application](#)—Guidance on the competitive application
- [6. Scoring Criteria](#)—How the review committee will score applications
- [7. Selection Process](#)—How DSLBD decides awardees
- [8. Award Information](#)—What happens if you are awarded a grant
- [9. Important Legal Disclaimers](#)—Important legal information
- [Appendix A](#): Pre-Award Required Documents
- [Appendix B](#): Allocation of Points
- [Appendix C](#): Final Report Requirements
- [Appendix D](#): Statement of Certification
- [Appendix E](#): We Aspire Program Overview
- [Appendix F](#): Dream Accelerator Program Overview

¹ As of March 3, 2026, the strikethrough text has been removed as it is no longer applicable. This applies to strikethrough text throughout this amended RFA. With respect to this update, the RFA has been amended to reflect the extended deadline. The deadline for submitting applications has been extended to accommodate any applicants who experienced technical issues with the application portal.

[Appendix G](#): District Capitalized Program Overview

[Appendix H](#): Slide Deck Template

1. Objective

The District of Columbia (“DC,” “D.C.,” or the “District”) Department of Small and Local Business Development (“DSLBD” or the “Department”) is excited to announce that it will begin accepting applications for the Fiscal Year (“FY”) 2026 Capacity Building Grant Program, beginning February 4, 2026.

The Capacity Building Grant Program is a DSLBD initiative created to:

- Strengthen the ecosystem of District-based businesses that deliver technical assistance;
- Identify providers to deliver targeted business development training and back-office services to program participants of DSLBD’s We Aspire, Dream Accelerator, and District Capitalized programs. *See more details of each program in Appendices E-G; and*
- Increase access to expertise and enhanced business development opportunities for participants of the We Aspire, Dream Accelerator, and District Capitalized programs.

The Department intends to award grants to programmatic providers, with a total of \$479,835.00 in available funding for FY26.

The Period of Performance for FY26 Capacity Building Grants will begin on or around the execution of the relevant grant agreement and end on September 30, 2026.

2. Online Application & Deadline

Applicants must register in the District Enterprise System (DES) and submit an application online using the link provided below:

<https://des.dslbd.dc.gov/>

Applicants must submit all documents and attestations within the DES. Applications will not be accepted if submitted outside the DES or after the FY26 Capacity Building Grant Program deadline.

Key Dates

DSLBD anticipates reviewing grant applications in March 2026 and notifying awardees in April 2026, but this timeframe is subject to change.

Date	Event
February 4, 2026 at 2pm	Application Opens
February 25, 2026 at 5pm	Last Day to Ask Questions
March 4, 2026 at 2-10:00 ² pm	Application Closes
February 17, 2026	Early Eligibility & Submission Review Deadline Applications submitted by this date will receive a courtesy review with feedback allowing the business to make corrections and resubmit by the final deadline.
April 20, 2026	Applicants Notified of Status

Look for FY26 Capacity Building Grant Program information sessions at <https://www.eventbrite.com/o/departments-of-small-local-business-development-7956762164>.

Outside of an information session, send all questions in writing to inno.ed@dc.gov. *DSLBD will not take questions via telephone.* The last day to submit questions for a guaranteed response is February 25, 2026.

3. Eligibility & Checklist

An applicant for a FY26 Capacity Building Grant Program must meet the following criteria:

- To be eligible as a provider for the We Aspire and Dream Accelerator programs, an applicant must be an active Certified Business Enterprise (CBE). Individuals applying on behalf of a CBE must be the CBE’s owner(s), authorized member(s), or authorized employee(s) of the CBE.
- To be eligible as a provider for the District Capitalized program, an applicant must be an active Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) or a District-based non-profit. Individuals applying on behalf of a CBE or non-profit must be the CBE’s owner(s), authorized member(s), or authorized employee(s) of the CBE. *Third parties cannot apply on behalf of a CBE.*
- The applicant's business must be based in DC.

² As of March 3, 2026, this RFA has been amended to reflect the new application deadline.

- The applicant's organization and Executive Director or other Officer(s) have not been suspended from any District grant program for any reason within the past five (5) years. DSLBD will not solicit offers from, award grants to, renew or extend grant agreements with, or consent to subcontracts with entities that have been suspended during this timeframe.

Applicants who do not meet eligibility requirements will not be considered or have their submitted competitive application questions reviewed.

Required Documents and Attestations for Eligibility

Entities applying for a FY26 Capacity Building Grant Program must upload the documents listed below directly to the DES. Applications that do not contain complete and verifiable documents, information, and attestations **will not be considered**. False attestations or documentation may result in grant forfeiture and other penalties, as appropriate.

Required Items	Description
a) Active DC Business License Number, issued by DLCP	<p>The license must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active, and ○ Searchable in the DLCP Business License Search Tool (https://scout.dcra.dc.gov). <p>If providing proof of alternative licensure, the license must be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Active, and ○ Relevant to the entity's industry.
b) Corporate Registration File Number and Good Standing Status, as determined by DLCP's Corp Online database.	<p>The Corporate Registration File Number provided must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be active, and ○ Demonstrate good standing (e.g., not expired, rescinded, or revoked). <p>Status can be verified at https://corponline.dcra.dc.gov.</p>
c) Certificate of Clean Hands ("CCH")	<p>The CCH must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Be issued within the last 90 days, and

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demonstrate no outstanding liability with the District. <p>This document demonstrates that the named entity has no outstanding liability (particularly with OTR and the Department of Employment Services [“DOES”]) within the District on the date of issuance. The CCH has a Notice Number, which DSLBD will use along with the entity’s Federal Tax Identification Number, to ascertain the entity’s “clean hands” status during the application review period. As such, the Grantee must maintain clean hands during this period so that it qualifies for a CCH on the date of processing by DSLBD.</p> <p>Generate a CCH for free at: https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands.</p>
d) Active CBE Certification Number *CBE only	The number must be for the applicant business and must be the same number listed on the DSLBD website at https://dslbd.secure.force.com/public/
e) Employer Tax Identification Number (“EIN”) or Tax Identification Number (“TIN”)	<p>The EIN or TIN provided must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Match the W-9 Form provided, and ○ Match the digits displayed on the relevant CCH. <p>Available for free at https://irs.gov.</p>
f) Statement of Certification	Provide a complete and signed Statement of Certification (“SOC”) in the DES. The SOC is a list of disclosures and certifications required of each applicant. See Appendix D for the full text of the SOC.

The above checklist covers ALL the required documentation used to determine an applicant’s eligibility.

4. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds

FY26 Capacity Building Grant Program funds must be expended during the Period of Performance and are solely for carrying out allowable uses, as dictated below and in the applicable grant agreement.

Allowed Uses

Grant funds may be used for any of the categories below, subject to approval by DSLBD. Additional costs proposed by the grantee that are not included below, but incurred during the Period of Performance, may be approved by DSLBD in its sole discretion.

Administrative – examples of eligible costs below:
Non-Profit Indirect Rate of 10% of grant award
Office Rental
Office Equipment
Employee Payroll
Owner’s Draw (Self-Pay)
Payroll Processing Fees
Benefits
Insurance
Software and Technology – examples of eligible costs below:
Administrative Subscription Services (CRMs, Document Management)
Website Development and Maintenance
Business Software or Upgrades
Audit & Accounting – examples of eligible costs below:
Accounting Software
Accounting Costs
Audit Services
Programmatic – examples of eligible costs below:
Events
Program Activations
Program Materials
Advertising – examples of eligible costs below:
Promotional Materials (Physical)
Promoted Social Media Posts or other forms of advertisement

Per the [Nonprofit Fair Compensation Act of 2020 \(“NFCA”\)](#), nonprofit grantees are entitled to an indirect rate. Most commonly, a de minimis indirect rate of 10% for all indirect costs under the grant is used. If a grantee has had a different indirect cost rate

with another District agency within the past two years, the grantee may elect to use that rate. Additional methods for determining an indirect cost rate, including utilizing a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (“NICRA”) rate, as negotiated with the federal government may be found within the linked legislation.

Disallowed Uses

Grant funds cannot be used for any of the following:

1. Financing or paying off pre-existing debt (e.g., credit card, lines of credit, loans, or tax obligations), whether for business or personal use.
2. Expenses incurred outside the Period of Performance.
3. Expenses reimbursed by a separate grant disbursed to the awardee, where the awardee is using different sources of funding to expense the same services performed and/or costs incurred (i.e., being remunerated twice for the same service/cost, otherwise known as “double-dipping” expenses).
4. Personal or other uses unrelated to the purposes explicitly identified in the grant agreement.
5. Food (except for food expenses incurred while attending professional development conferences related to the Grant Program outside of the Washington, DC metropolitan area).
6. Alcohol or alcohol-related paraphernalia (e.g., wine glasses, mixers, or beer taps).
7. Payments to a professional fundraiser.
8. Donations or charitable giving to nonprofit organizations.
9. Vehicle purchases or leases.
10. Real estate purchases.
11. Costs related to DC or federal government lobbying efforts.
12. Costs related to lawsuits against the District or federal government.
13. Any activity, good, service, or product deemed illegal by the District.
14. Any activity, good, service, or product deemed ineligible by DSLBD in its sole discretion.
15. Expenses incurred without prior DSLBD approval.

DSLBD will compare grantees’ proof of grant fund expenditures against approved costs set forth in the applicable grant agreement and disallow costs that do not comply with program requirements. DSLBD will only approve the disbursement of grant funds to awardees who maintain required insurance coverage for the entirety of the relevant grant period, which includes the Period of Performance.

5. Competitive Application

The competitive portion of the application consists of two (2) sections. Each section corresponds with the scoring criteria listed in Section 6 of the RFA. Please note that some questions provide applicants with an option to upload additional documentation in support of their response(s).

FY26 Capacity Building Grant Program

Section A: Organizational Overview

1. Describe your organization's history and mission. Provide an overview of your organization, including information about its services or products and current presence in the District.

Section B: Organizational Experience & Capacity

See Appendices E-G for detailed descriptions of each Program and Programmatic service areas to aid in your application.

1. Select the program(s) for which you are interested in providing services under the FY26 Capacity Building Grant. ***(Check all that apply)***
2. Explain how your organization's expertise aligns with the selected program(s). If this is the first time your entity has ventured into this program type, describe how your team will adapt any relevant previous experience to this program.
3. Select the Programmatic Service Area(s) for which you are interested in providing under the FY26 Capacity Building Grant. ***(Check all that apply)***
4. Describe your organization's experience and capacity to provide the selected service area(s) Include details on staffing, infrastructure, and systems that enable you to manage and execute programmatic activities effectively.
5. How does your organization ensure that it effectively supports entrepreneurs who have faced barriers to business ownership, such as limited access to resources, opportunities, or capital? Describe your approach to addressing these challenges and how your services will help participants overcome them.

6. Scoring Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate all eligible applications. Applicants are encouraged to review their proposals against these scoring criteria before submitting a final application.

For a more thorough breakdown of the scoring criteria, see Appendix B.

Section	Core Areas of Evaluation	Total Points
A. Organizational Overview	N/A	0
B. Organizational Experience & Capacity	Organizational experience and capability	50
	Proof of Demonstrated Ability	
	Ability to do work with DC Based Small Businesses	

7. Selection Process

DSLBD will select eligible organizations through a competitive application process for the FY26 Capacity Building Grant Program. A panel will review timely submitted and complete eligible applications. The Review Panel will score applications using the criteria outlined in the RFA. The RFA Review Panel may be composed of DSLBD partners, members of the public, and DC government employees, who will review eligible applications received by the submission deadline and score them against the above criteria.

Top candidates will be invited to present their proposed programming to the Presentation Evaluation Panel and respond to interview-style questions. Candidates are required to prepare a slide deck with no more than 10 slides outlining their proposed programming plan. See Appendix G for slide deck outline. Scores from live presentations will inform the Presentation Evaluation Panel’s recommendations.

The Presentation Evaluation Panel will be comprised of members of DSLBD’s Innovation and Equitable Development Division (“Inno.ED”). This panel will report recommendations to the Director of DSLBD. Taking the Evaluation Panel’s recommendations into account, the Director of DSLBD will ultimately make the final determination of awardees.

The Director will approve all grant awards at the final stage. Announcements of selected awards will be made on or around April 20, 2026.

DSLBD hopes to select a diverse group of awardees to support its goal of delivering targeted business development training and back-office services to selected program participants from DSLBD's We Aspire, Dream Accelerator, and District Capitalized grant program cohorts.

Applicants who are not awarded a grant can request a debriefing call with the DSLBD team. More details on DSLBD's Applicant Debrief and Grievance Process are available here: <https://dslbd.dc.gov/grant-debrief-and-grievance-procedures-applicants>.

8. Award Information

A. Grant Award Notification

DSLBD will notify successful applicants of its selection decision by email and send a Notice of Grant Award ("NOGA") to the awardees along with additional post-award instructions.

Applicants who are not awarded a grant will be notified of their status no later than one (1) week following the initial notification to awardees.

B. Grant Award Acceptance

Awardees are expected to accept the award within five (5) business days from the date of the NOGA. NOGAs will list any contingencies and additional requirements. Awardees are expected to maintain their eligibility status from the time of the award throughout the entire Period of Performance. Eligibility status is based on compliance with items outlined in Section 3 of the RFA as well as additional requirements set forth in Appendix A.

C. Post-Award Documents

Awardees must submit the documents set forth in Appendix A before a grant agreement can be finalized.

D. Formal Grant Agreement

Each awardee must sign a grant agreement with DSLBD after meeting all contingency and pre-award requirements. For awardees who have received a DSLBD grant in the past, awards will be contingent on compliance with applicable DC laws and regulations and may also be contingent on the completion of their previous grant's reporting requirements. An awardee may forfeit funds if it (1) refuses to execute a grant agreement during the award process, (2) fails to execute the agreement by DSLBD's deadline, (3) cannot meet

post-award requirements for any reason, or (4) cannot make the appropriate and required attestations related to the Grant Program.

E. Additional Survey Assessment

DSLBD may survey awardees following the execution of grant agreements. Grantees must comply with DSLBD's survey requests.

F. Grant Reporting

Grantees must comply with the reporting requirements set forth in their respective grant agreements. Grantees must submit an approved budget outlining the expenditures made in connection with the Grant Program, along with appropriate documentation. DSLBD will only accept full, bona fide receipts, canceled checks, and other verifiable evidence of payment as proof that a grantee made appropriate expenditures. Grantees who fail to submit appropriate documentation of proper expenditures may be required to return funds.

Grantees must prepare a final report by October 30, 2026 that includes, among other items, proof of appropriate expenditures and their program's impact (See Appendix C).

G. Disbursement (Payment)

Disbursement terms shall be determined after awardees are selected and will be outlined in the grant agreement. Terms may require DSLBD's collection of additional documentation, such as the items set forth in Appendix A.

Disbursements will be sent by one of the following methods (1) via electronic fund transfer to the grantee's bank account, as registered with the District Integrated Financial System ("DIFS"), or (2) through a third-party payor/servicer. In the latter case, a third-party payor will collect and verify banking payment information from each grantee. The District intends to pay an invoice within thirty (30) days of receipt of an approved, proper invoice.

Grantees are responsible for reporting their grant award(s) as income on federal and local tax returns (in accordance with applicable law) and are strongly encouraged to consult with a tax professional and the United States Internal Revenue Service.

H. Modifications

Final grant agreements may require addenda, amendments, or modifications. An awardee that cannot comply with final grant agreement terms and/or provide other

requested materials may be disqualified from their specific grant program, and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant.

9. Important Legal Disclaimers

This section includes DSLBD’s legal disclaimers regarding the release of this RFA.

A. Contingent

Funding for this award is contingent on sufficient and continued funding from the District. Neither the RFA nor the corresponding NOFA obligates the Department to issue an award.

B. Application Acceptance

DSLBD will not review applications that do not comply with all instructions listed in the RFA or NOFA. The Department reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if it determines it is in the best interest of the District. DSLBD may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA or NOFA pursuant to its own grant-making rule(s) or any applicable federal regulation or requirement.

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

C. Notice of Funding Availability

DSLBD published the corresponding NOFA in the DC Register and the Office of Partnerships and Grant Services (“OPGS”) on December 26, 2025. The NOFA is available at <http://dslbd.dc.gov/>.

D. Conflicts and Choice of Law

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, the terms and conditions of the applicable law or regulation will control, and it shall be the responsibility of the applicant to ensure compliance. The grant application shall be governed and interpreted under the laws of the District of Columbia and any applicable federal laws without regard to conflict of law principles.

E. Costs of Applications

Neither DSLBD nor the DC government shall be liable for any costs incurred by an applicant in the preparation of any grant application(s) for the FY26 Capacity Building Grant Program. All costs incurred in developing and preparing any grant application shall be the applicant's sole responsibility.

F. Ownership of Content

DSLBD is considered the owner of any content developed for technical assistance purposes and paid for through a DSLBD grant award. As such, DSLBD may retain and reuse written or recorded materials and concepts at a future time.

G. Accessibility

Grant-funded programming should be made available and accessible to all attendees.

Attendees of a grant-funded business event may request language access accommodations when registering for activities funded through this grant. Requests for language and American Sign Language ("ASL") interpretation must be forwarded immediately to the DSLBD Grant Coordinator. If requests are made at least ten (10) business days prior to the activity start date, DSLBD will arrange for language and ASL interpretation services for grant event organizers who confirm their participation and need.

In-person classes or workshops funded by District grants will be held at ADA-compliant locations or will offer virtual attendance options.

H. Reservation of Rights

1. DSLBD reserves the right to issue addenda, amendments, and/or any other modifications after the issuance of the NOFA or RFA or to rescind the NOFA or RFA. DSLBD will post addenda, amendments, or any other modifications in the online application (see Section 2). Applicants are responsible for reviewing and adhering to any NOFA or RFA addenda, amendments, or modifications.
2. DSLBD may suspend or terminate an outstanding NOFA or RFA pursuant to any other applicable local, state, or federal regulation or requirement.
3. DSLBD may conduct pre-award onsite visits to verify information that an applicant submits in a grant application. The Department's access and ability to verify such information shall not be unreasonably withheld. Further, DSLBD may request

additional information from applicants at any time during the application and grantmaking process

4. DSLBD serves as its own reference when evaluating applications; it is not required to consult with outside parties. Grant decisions may reflect applicants' prior performance in managing previous government grants.

5. DSLBD may negotiate with an awardee to finalize funding amounts or otherwise adopt revisions to an awardee's proposal as it relates to the Grant Program.

Appendix A: Pre-Award Document Requirements

If awarded this grant, your organization should be prepared to provide DSLBD with the following documents and/or information upon receiving a Notice of Grant Award. The documents listed below are not required to apply, but they will be collected from awardees before the issuance of a grant agreement.

- A. **Policies and Procedures.** Your organization should provide copies of its internal policies and procedures, including any conflict-of-interest policies.
- B. **Non-Profit Board Roster.** For non-profits, provide the most current roster of your board members to include their names, titles, emails, and phone numbers.
- C. **IRS 501c3 Determination Letter.** For non-profits, provide your organization's IRS 501c3 Determination Letter.
- D. **Proof of Insurance:** Selected applicants must demonstrate that they have applicable insurance coverage at the beginning of the Period of Performance. Specific insurance requirements will be stated in the grant agreement. Selected applicants must provide that meet the following (a) general requirements and (b) insurance types:

General Requirements:

1. The Grantee shall require its subcontractors to carry and provide proof of the same insurance requirements herein.
2. All insurance shall be written with financially responsible companies authorized to do business in the District of Columbia and have an A.M. Best Insurance Guide rating of at least A-VII (or the equivalent by any other rating agency).
3. All required policies shall contain a waiver of subrogation provision in favor of the District of Columbia.
4. The District of Columbia shall be included as an additional insured in all policies required to be maintained by the Grantee and its subcontractors (except workers' compensation) for any and all claims against the District relating to the Grant Agreement, with the understanding that any affirmative obligation imposed upon the insured Grantee or its subcontractors (including without limitation the liability to pay premiums) shall be the sole obligation of the Grantee or its subcontractors, and not the additional insured.

Insurance Types:

1. General Liability Insurance: in the name of the Applicant Organization with the District of Columbia government names as an Additional Insured. Insurance minimums must be at least \$1,000,000 each occurrence \$2,000,000 general aggregate, \$1,000,000 personal and advertising injury limit, \$2,000,000 products-completed operations aggregate. Must be occurrence basis, not claims-made.
2. Workers Compensation Insurance: In the name of the Applicant Organization, or in the name of the Subcontractor organization (if the organization is sub-contracting basic services) for all employees of the Applicant organization or the subcontractor.
3. Cyber Liability Insurance in the name of the Applicant organization with limits at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence or claim, \$1,000,000 aggregate.
4. Auto Insurance (required only if Applicant owns a vehicle) with combined single limits at least \$1,000,000 per occurrence for bodily injury and property damage.

Appendix B: Allocation of Points

Corresponding RFA Criteria Category	Corresponding RFA Question	Total Points
A. Organizational Overview	Describe your organization’s history and mission. Provide an overview of your organization, including information about its services or products and current presence in the District.	0
B. Organizational Experience & Capacity	Explain how your organization’s expertise aligns with the selected program(s). If this is the first time your entity has ventured into this program type, describe how your team will adapt any relevant previous experience to this program.	20
	Describe your organization’s experience and capacity to provide the selected service area(s). Include details on staffing, infrastructure, and systems that enable you to manage and execute programmatic activities effectively.	20
	How does your organization ensure that it effectively supports entrepreneurs who have faced barriers to business ownership, such as limited access to resources, opportunities, or capital? Please describe your approach to addressing these challenges and how your services will help participants overcome them.	10
TOTAL		50

Appendix C: Final Report Requirements

- Summary of Program Outcomes and Achievements (Impact)
- Summary of Lessons Learned
- Explanation of Unmet Deliverables
- Explanation of Unspent Funds to be Returned to DSLBD
- Final Budget
- Additional metrics outlined in the grant agreement

Appendix D

STATEMENT OF CERTIFICATION

1. I, _____, as the authorized officer or representative of Applicant, swear to the truth of the information below:

The following individual is authorized to negotiate with DSLBD on behalf of Awardee:

- a. Name: _____
- b. Title: _____
- c. Phone: _____
- d. Email: _____

- 2. Applicant agrees that all costs incurred in developing the application are the applicant's sole responsibility;
- 3. Applicant has read the corresponding NOFA and RFA in their entirety;
- 4. Applicant will meet all reporting requirements and maintain accurate, complete, and current files and records at all times, which must be made available for audit and inspection by DSLBD (or its designee) upon request or as required by law;
- 5. Applicant keeps, and will continue to keep, all their fiscal records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles ("GAAP") and account for all funds, tangible assets, revenue, and expenditures whatsoever;
- 6. Applicant will provide timely and reasonable access to its personnel by DSLBD (or its designee) for the purpose of interviews and discussions related to the awardee's records and operations, if needed;
- 7. Applicant, if required by DSLBD, is able to secure a bond, in an amount not less than the total amount of the funds awarded, against losses of money and other property caused by fraudulent or dishonest act(s) committed by any employee, board member, officer, partner, owner, shareholder, or trainee;
- 8. Applicant has, and will continue to have, the necessary administrative capability, organization, experience, financial resources, accounting and operational controls, and technical skills to implement the grant or subgrant program, or the ability to obtain them within 10 business days of executing a Grant Agreement (with proof of such ability);
- 9. Applicant has, and will continue to comply with the required or proposed delivery or performance schedule, taking into consideration all existing and reasonably expected commercial and governmental business commitments (i.e., meaning all the grantee's private and public commitments will not interfere with its ability to perform, as expected, on the relevant DSLBD grant);
- 10. Applicant is, and will continue to be, in compliance with the applicable District licensing, laws (e.g., tax), and regulations;

11. Applicant is, and will continue to be, compliant on payment of all federal and District taxes (or on an approved payment agreement), including Unemployment Insurance taxes and Workers' Compensation premiums;
12. Applicant is in compliance with, and will continue to comply with, the minimum insurance coverages set forth in the applicable Notice of Grant Award and/or Grant Agreement for activities that may be undertaken in connection with the performance of the grant;
13. Applicant meets all other qualifications and eligibility criteria necessary to receive an award under applicable laws and regulations;
14. Applicant acknowledges its responsibility to act with integrity in all aspects of the grant process and that it is prohibited from working with other applicants or award recipients to inflate costs, fix prices, or allocate workers in a way that distorts fair competition or results in an unfair advantage;
15. Applicant acknowledges and agrees that it will ensure transparency and prevent situations where personal or financial interests could compromise the integrity of a grant-funded project, program, or opportunity and undermine the public's trust as a result of potential or actual conflicts of interest relating to applicant/grantee personnel or its subcontractors (even if it is following internal conflict of interest policies and procedures during the administration of a grant, which applicant understands a copy must be provided to DSLBD before commencement of the grant, if applicable);
16. Applicant is not proposed for debarment or presently debarred, suspended, or declared ineligible, pursuant to D.C. Official Code § 2-329.07, or as required by Executive Order 12549, "Debarment and Suspension," and implemented by 2 CFR 180, for prospective participants in primary covered transactions and is not proposed for debarment, presently debarred, suspended, proposed for suspension, or similarly penalized pursuant to relevant processes of other agencies, such as the revocation of Certified Business Enterprise ("CBE") certification or the suspension (or higher penalty) from participation in DC grant programs, as a result of any of the applicant's actions by the DC Contract Appeals Board, the Office of Contracting and Procurement ("OCP"), or any other District agency;
17. Applicant is compliant with D.C. Official Code §1-328.15(c)-(d);³
18. Have you, the applicant entity, or any of your entity's officers, partners, owners, principals, board members, associates, or key employees, been indicted, or had charges brought against them (if still pending), and/or been convicted of (a) any crime or offense arising directly or indirectly from, or been held civilly liable for, the conduct of the applicant's organization or (b) any crime or offense involving financial misconduct, business ethics, or fraud over the last three (3) years? Yes No
 - a. *If the response is in the affirmative, fully describe any such indictments, charges, convictions, or legal proceedings (and the status and disposition thereof) and surrounding circumstances in writing and provide documentation of the circumstances.*

³ Entities referenced under D.C. Official Code § 1-328.15(c)-(d) shall be ineligible to receive a grant from the District valued at \$100,000 during the time period set forth in the applicable statutory section. Please read <https://code.dccouncil.gov/us/dc/council/code/sections/1-328.15> for more details.

19. Have you, or any of your entity’s officers, partners, principals, owners, board members, associates, or key employees, been the subject of legal proceedings arising directly from the provision of services by the organization? Yes No

a. *If the response is in the affirmative, fully describe any such indictments, charges, convictions, or legal proceedings (and the status and disposition thereof) and surrounding circumstances in writing and provide documentation of the circumstances.*

20. Please disclose any other grants or contracts awarded to applicant with any agency of DC Government within the past three (3) years;

21. Please disclose any subcontracts or subgrants applicant has received in the past three (3) years relating to a DC Government grant or contract, in whole or in part; and

22. I solemnly swear under the penalties of perjury that all information provided in the application and/or pre-award submissions is true and accurate. I understand that 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 applicable.

Organization Name: _____

Signature: _____

Title: _____

Appendix E: We Aspire Program

The We Aspire program provides business development support for returning citizens who are DC residents. A returning citizen is defined as someone who is or was justice-involved, meaning they were previously incarcerated, on parole, or on probation. DSLBD will onboard program participants through a competitive process. Businesses participating in We Aspire are often, but not exclusively, early-stage businesses. In FY 2026, DSLBD anticipates a cohort of 25 to 50 Aspirants.

SERVICE AREA	PURPOSE	BREAKDOWN	BUDGET
Printing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Aspire Incubator Program Manuals (Spiral Booklet) ▪ SWAG Items (Notebooks, Pens, T-Shirts) ▪ Aspire Incubator Program Signage ▪ Participant Certificates with Holders 	Up to \$4,000.00 up to two (2) providers that can fulfill this request	\$4,000.00
Event Planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Closeout Celebration (Decorations (Balloons, Tablecloths, Signage, Securing Location, Interactive Games, Caterer or Sponsor for Food) 	Up to \$6,000.00 for one (1) provider that can fulfill this request	\$6,000.00
Technical Assistance	Facilitators for Core Topics and Technical Assistance Office Hours		\$60,000.00
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accounting, Bookkeeping, & Financial Management 	Up to \$12,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advertising, Branding & Marketing 	Up to \$12,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Growth & Sustainability 	Up to \$12,000	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Planning & Business Development ▪ Regulatory Compliance & Set-up 	Up to \$12,000	
Storytelling & Content Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photography (class action & still shots, professional headshot) ▪ Video (class shots and individual cohort participant storytelling) ▪ Promotional Video or Commercial for Aspire Incubator Pitch Competition Winner: 30-60 second promo video or commercial for pitch competition winner's business 	Up to \$6,000 for one or up to two (2) providers that can fulfill this request	\$10,000.00
TOTAL			\$80,000

We Aspire Participants will complete the cohort with an understanding of the following:

Advertising, Branding, & Marketing

This includes:

- How to establish brand identity and logo design for a business
- Create a business email account for a business
- Learn about business design tools (Canva, Wix, Adobe Express, etc.) and how to sell a business to engage potential clients and customers, facilitating an elevator pitch
- Learn about technology and software tools (AI, ChatGPT, etc.) to enhance business operations
- Learn the difference between advertising, branding, and marketing a business
Strategies and techniques to advertise, brand, and market a business (i.e., business logo, online business presence, business cards, and advertisements)
- Learn what goes into a pitch deck and craft a compelling story about a business by identifying the problem, solution, market, business model, financials, and more
- Build confidence, master the art of storytelling, and understand audience needs by presenting a pitch to get feedback and improve this skill

Business Planning & Business Development

This includes:

- How to flesh out a business idea/business concept
- Establish the business "WHY"
- Complete a business Lean Canvas and a SWOT Analysis
- Develop a business plan
- Identify the goals needed to get your business started, sustainable, and growing by creating a work plan and a two-year growth plan

Regulatory Compliance & Set-Up

This includes:

- Federal, local, (DC-specific) and industry laws, rules, and guidelines to avoid fines, protect reputation, and operate ethically in the District of Columbia
- This will cover how to register a business, types of business licenses, where to get an Employer Identification Number (EIN), and more
- Confirm that the current business structure is best for the business, determine whether additional licenses or permits are required, and the purpose of business insurance

Accounting, Bookkeeping & Financial Management

This includes:

- Basic core principles of financial management, the range of banking products and services available to businesses, the importance of separating personal and business finances, and the regulations governing the industry
- Identify the signs and symptoms of financial trauma, understand its psychological impacts on behaviors and relationships, and develop trauma-informed strategies for creating a safe and supportive environment
- Learn strategic planning, organizing, directing, and controlling business financial activities to ensure profitability, stability, and growth
- This involves managing cash flow, budgeting, forecasting, and making key decisions on investments and capital structure to achieve the company's financial goals
- Focus on preparing financial statements and understanding key terms like assets, liabilities, revenues, expenses, and equity
- Learn back-office record-keeping strategies to organize and store internal business documents like accounting, HR, and operational records, ensuring they are accurate, accessible, and compliant with regulations
- Core principles of financial management, the range of banking products and services available to businesses, separating personal and business finances, and the regulations governing the industry
- Learn how to access capital , grants, contracts, and more to help leverage a business

Business Growth & Sustainability

This includes:

- How to establish ways to grow and sustain a business by completing a Business Model Canvas, SWOT Analysis, work plans, growth plans, and refining a business plan
- Learn about business networking tools and resources to meet potential business clients, partners, and investors
- Learn how to grow a business by obtaining certifications, gaining professional licenses, and securing contracts and procurement opportunities

Appendix F: Dream Accelerator Program

Dream Accelerator Program is a cohort-based training experience for resident-owned microbusinesses with five or fewer employees located in DC Wards 7 and 8. This program was developed to help microbusinesses located east of the Anacostia River grow

and thrive. DSLBD will onboard program participants through a competitive process. The Program will culminate in the Dream Pitch Competition, a chance for participants to pitch their business to a panel of judges and compete for cash awards ranging from \$2,500 to \$7,500. DSLBD anticipates a cohort of 40 to 60 Dreamers in FY 2026.

SERVICE AREA	PURPOSE	BREAKDOWN	BUDGET
Design & Printing Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dream Accelerator Program Manuals ▪ SWAG Items (Notebooks, Pens, T-Shirts) ▪ Dream Accelerator Program Signage ▪ Participant Certificates with Holders 	Up to \$7,500.00 up to two (2) providers that can fulfill this request	\$7,500.00
Event Planner	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Oversee Pitch events and/ or Program Closeout Ceremony, manage vendors and venue coordination to include managing logistics. 	Up to \$10,000.00	\$15,000.00
Technical Assistance	Facilitators for Core Topics and Technical Assistance Office Hours		\$90,000.00
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Core Business Foundations 	Up to \$18,000.00	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial Management/ Projections & Accessing Capital 	Up to \$18,000.00	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marketing, Branding & Sales 	Up to \$18,000.00	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Operations & Sustainable Growth 	Up to \$18,000.00	
Storytelling & Content Creation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Using Artificial Intelligence for Your Business 	Up to \$18,000.00	\$25,000.00
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photography & Videography services during cohort 	Up to \$25,000.00	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Photography (class action & still shots, professional headshots 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Video (class shots and individual cohort participant story telling) 		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Promotional Video or Commercial for Dream Accelerator Pitch Competition Winner: 30-60 second promo video or commercial for pitch competition winner’s business 		
Elective Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Innovative, new, or trending business topics not listed as a core topic. 		Up to \$12,000.00
TOTAL			\$180,000.00

Dream Accelerator Participants will complete the cohort with an understanding of the following:

Core Business Foundations

This includes:

- Understanding the essential components of a business model
- Articulating a clear mission, vision, and value proposition
- Identifying key customer segments and customer/market pain points, and the product/service offering to the identified customer/market

Financial Management/Projections & Accessing Capital

This includes:

- Building basic financial projections (income statement, cash flow)
- Understanding funding options (credit) and how to prepare for investor/funder conversations, accessing capital.
- Identifying key financial metrics for business health

Marketing, Branding & Sales

This includes:

- Developing a marketing strategy tailored to target audiences
- Building a compelling brand identity and communicating your value proposition
- Understanding the sales funnel and customer journey
- Using digital tools to track and improve marketing performance

Operations & Sustainable Growth

This includes:

- Identifying key processes and tools for efficiency
- Understanding principles of sustainable business growth
- Building strategic alliances
- Leveraging local business ecosystems

Using Artificial Intelligence for Your Business

This includes:

- Identifying AI tools that can streamline business operations
- Understanding ethical and practical considerations of AI use
- Applying AI to tasks like customer service, marketing, and product development

Appendix G: District Capitalized Program

The District Capitalized Program is a “hub-and-spoke model” through which DSLBD serves as the central coordinator and gateway to: 1) engage targeted eligible DC-based business beneficiaries; 2) process their requests for financial management guidance or funding; 3) connect them to appropriate technical assistance (TA) from providers so that the businesses can prepare for, apply to and/or leverage an award from one or more targeted financing programs; and 4) track, in real time, the technical assistance provision and the impact it has on helping eligible beneficiaries achieve their financing goal.

SERVICE AREA	PURPOSE	BREAKDOWN	BUDGET
Technical Assistance Providers (trainers and consultants)	To provide classes, small group guidance, one-on-one consultation on <i>District Capitalized Topics</i> and <i>Related Resource</i> Information to help qualified businesses get ready to apply, qualify and manage funds raised through financing (e.g., loans, lines of credit, grants) and through some contracts.	Up to \$44,000	\$130,000.00
Graphic Design Services	To provide creation of program branding, infographics, social content, web content and other materials to support promotion of District Capitalized Hub program and services to target audiences.	Up to \$24,495.00	\$24,495.00
Purchasing accounting software licenses and issuing them to qualified businesses	To provide businesses with the licensure/ subscription to accounting software.	Up to \$65,340.00	\$65,340.00
TOTAL			\$219,835.00

Businesses that engage in the District Capitalized Program will have access to classes, small group guidance, and one-on-one consultations that cover the following topics:

- **Accounting services:**
 - Preparing audits, financial statements, or business records that are required to obtain funding
 - Digitizing financial records to support getting ready to apply for funding
 - Advisory services or training regarding accounting practices, recordkeeping, or accounting software
- **Financial advisory services:**
 - Assisting with the establishment of banking relationships or other financial services
 - Assisting with applications for District Capitalized's targeted small business programs, including preparing financial analyses
 - Advising on factors that may impede access to business financing
 - Advising on financial management
 - Developing presentations to potential investors, financial models, and business plans
- **Legal services:**
 - Advising on, or preparing documents for, the business to enter into crowdfunded investment financial applications or some contracts
 - Legal services related to the business obtaining capital from investors, such as the development of financial instruments, investment term sheets, purchase agreements, and shareholder rights agreements
- **Communications:**
 - Assisting with the submission of compelling and compliant communication content to apply for funding products that are pitch-based or investment-based. Communications Technical assistance support will be limited to:
 - Verbal pitch talking point; presentation decks; online pitch pages, brief video pitches; or web landing pages specific to pursuing funding products

Appendix H: Slide Deck Template

Slide #1: Title Slide

Slide #2: Why Did You Apply?

Slide #3: Program & Service Area

Slide #4: Program Approach/ Delivery

Slide #5: Budget

Slide #6: Team

Slide #7: Proposed Programming Impact/Closing