



Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) All Things Green Grants Request for Applications (RFA)

January 22, 2024, through February 16, 2024, at 2:00 pm EST

How to use this document to guide your application process:

This Request for Applications (RFA) is the full set of instructions for applicants to understand how to complete the application. **All applicants are encouraged to read this entire document before submitting an application.** This document outlines the following sections:

- 1. Objective**—What DSLBD seeks to accomplish through the grant
- 2. Online Application Deadline**—Where eligible businesses must apply online and when
- 3. Eligibility & Documentation** -- What businesses are eligible to apply and what paperwork is required
- 4. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds**—How the funds cannot be spent
- 5. Narrative & Budget Questions**—The competitive application
- 6. Scoring Criteria**—How the review committee will score the grant narrative
- 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

Look for CBE All Things Green Grant information sessions at <http://bit.ly/DSLBDeventbrite>. Outside of an information session, **send all questions in writing to business.opportunities@dc.gov. No phone calls will be accepted.**

1. Objective

The District of Columbia (DC or District) Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD or the Department) is excited to announce that it will begin soliciting applications for the Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 **CBE All Things Green Grants**, beginning January 22, 2024.

The CBE All Things Green Grants are awards for direct support to small, resident-owned, and disadvantaged CBEs pursuing DC Sustainable Energy Utility (DCSEU) contracting opportunities or opportunities with similar “green” or environmentally sustainable goals. DSLBD seeks:

- A. CBEs to provide direct marketing and direct back-office services (technical proposal development and costs estimation for proposals) and training on areas that would strengthen CBE preparedness and competitiveness for green energy-related procurement opportunities.
- B. One (1) CBE to conduct a four-week cohort-based training program for other CBEs that are registered with DSLBD as small, resident-owned, or disadvantaged.
- C. Five (5) CBEs, by way of a lottery for CBEs, that are registered with DSLBD as small, resident-owned, or disadvantaged. The CBEs that are awarded under this category will use grant funds under the allowed maintain business operation and viability in order to pursue opportunities with DCSEU or other green contracts.
- D. An event planner to coordinate the CBE Green Industry Rally Day. CBE Green Industry Rally Day is an annual event for CBEs to learn more about DOEE and DCSEU green building and energy initiatives. The event will offer matchmaking sessions with DCSEU for contracting and networking opportunities.

CBE Green is a DSLBD initiative that was created to promote and support the involvement of CBEs in the expanding green and environmentally sustainable energy and buildings market. In partnership with DC’s Department of Energy and the Environment (DOEE), DSLBD is supporting CBEs through additional training opportunities to prepare them for procurement opportunities offered by DOEE, DCSEU, and beyond.

Direct back-office support and training are key building blocks to prepare CBEs for participation in contracting opportunities. The marketing of DSLBD grants will help connect CBEs to contracting opportunities. The four-week cohort-based training program is an opportunity for applicants to enhance their “green” business models. Grant funds will

allow eligible businesses to maintain business operations while also pursuing contracts with DC Sustainable Energy Utility (DCSEU) and similar entities. The training program is designed for CBEs interested in learning about green procurement opportunities and connecting with contracting officers.

DSLBD will refer CBEs to service providers who are awarded a CBE All Things Green Grant during the grant period of performance, beginning on or around March 18, 2024, and ending September 30, 2024.

To maximize the support available to CBEs, DSLBD intends to award between four (4) to eight (8) grants with \$500,000 in total available funding for Fiscal Year 2024. Grant awards are limited to one (1) category. Applicants may apply for funding in the following service areas:

The CBE Green Contract Services Grants: DSLBD intends to award up to six (6) grants at a maximum of \$50,000 per grant from \$300,000 in available funding for FY24. These grant awards will cover a mix of marketing and back-office services for at least 30 CBEs, each pursuing green energy procurement opportunities.

The CBE Green Pitch Grant: DSLBD intends to award one (1) grant of \$50,000 to one (1) recipient and grants between \$2,000 and \$10,000 to a maximum of ten (10) CBE Green Pitch participants from \$125,000 of total funding for FY24.

The CBE Green Business Support Lottery Grants: DSLBD intends to award up to \$10,000 per grant to approximately five (5) CBEs, by way of a lottery for CBEs, that are registered with DSLBD as small, resident-owned, or disadvantaged.

The CBE Green Event Grant: DSLBD intends to award up to \$25,000 to one (1) CBE. DSLBD is seeking an event planner to coordinate the CBE Green Industry Rally Day.

2. Online Application & Deadline

Apply at <https://www.zoomgrants.com/gprop.asp?donorid=2274&limited=5089>. *To start your application, you must create a Zoom Grants account by logging in at ZoomGrants.com.*

Only complete applications submitted through Zoom Grants, which is an online grant application system used by DSLBD, will be accepted and scored. No application materials will be accepted outside of the application system or after the CBE Green grant deadline has passed.

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 provide technical support Monday – Friday from 10 am - 7 pm eastern time. Reach out to Zoom Grants at any time during the application period if you have technical difficulties by emailing Questions@ZoomGrants.com.

The last date to submit questions is February 2, 2024 at 2:00 pm. The final deadline to submit an application is February 16, 2024 at 2:00 pm. No exceptions.

Grants are scheduled to be reviewed by DSLBD in February 2024 with selected applicants notified by email sometime in March 2024. This period is subject to change.

3. Eligibility & Checklist

Only CBEs that are compliant with applicable District laws are eligible to apply for CBE All Things Green Grants. Applicants must be the business owner(s), authorized members, or authorized employees of the CBE. *Third-party support may be added to the application but cannot apply on behalf of a CBE.* Required documentation must demonstrate:

- Active CBE status
- Active Business Licensure
- Compliance with DC Tax and Licensing Laws
- Commercial General Liability Insurance Coverage
- Workers Compensation Insurance Coverage, as applicable
- Automobile Liability Insurance Coverage, as applicable
- Registered or prepared to register as a DC Vendor to receive payment

Failure to Demonstrate Eligibility

Applications from applicants who do not meet eligibility requirements will not be scored or considered for a CBE All Things Green grant. All documents and attestations showing eligibility must be submitted through the online Zoom Grants application system. False attestations can result in grant forfeiture and other penalties as appropriate.

Applicants interested in applying for a CBE All Things Green Grants MUST submit the required Eligibility Documents and Attestations outlined below and meet the status criteria.

Required Documents and Attestations for Eligibility

Required Items	Description
a) Active CBE Certification Number	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/ .
b) Active DC Business License Number	Must be searchable in the DLCP Business License Look Up (https://scout.dhra.dc.gov) or uploaded to provide proof of alternative licensure if DLCP licensing is not required for the business type.
c) Office of Tax & Revenue Compliant “Clean Hands” Document issued October 1, 2023, or later	Applicants can check their Clean Hands status and generate a notice of compliance (if compliant) for free at https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean-hands .
d) Proof of Commercial General Liability Insurance (Certificate of Insurance). As applicable, proof of workmen’s compensation and automobile liability.	DSLBD cannot provide carrier recommendations – grantees must have coverage during grant activities (expenditures). Once selected, grantees must name the District as an additional assured on its required policies.
e) Employment Identification Number (EIN)	Available for free at IRS.gov
f) IRS W-9 2018 form or later	Available at https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf
g) Attestation of Registration as a Vendor with the Office of Contracts and Procurement	Details available at https://ocp.dc.gov/page/vendor-registration-electronic-solicitations-ocp . DSLBD will verify internally.

The above checklist covers ALL the required documentation used to determine an applicant’s eligibility. Applications that fail to provide complete and verifiable documents, information, and attestations **will not be scored**.

4. Restrictions on Allowable Uses of Funds

CBE All Things Green Grants have allowed uses and disallowed uses. All expenses funded by the CBE All Things Green Grants must occur during “Period of Performance,” which is the effective date of the final grant agreement through September 30, 2024.

The proposed use of funds must be acceptable to DSLBD and will be outlined in individual grant agreements.

Allowed Uses

The funds can be used for any of the following:

1. Direct support and related costs, including but not limited to staff time, materials, space for in-person meetings, or technology for virtual meetings
2. Software for clients directly related to support activities (i.e., accounting or project management software)
3. Marketing collateral and programming of CBEs and opportunities
4. Cost related to analyzing the effectiveness of support and trainings
5. Other costs proposed by the applicant and accepted by DSLBD in its sole discretion during the Period of Performance

Disallowed Uses

The funds cannot be used for any of the following:

1. Financing existing debt, including payment of taxes owed
2. Payments and expenses incurred outside of the Period of Performance
3. Expenses that are reimbursed by a different grant from the District government
4. Personal use or other uses not related to the purposes identified in the grant
5. Food (with the exception of food while attending professional development conferences outside of the Washington, DC metropolitan area or for the CBE Green Event Grantee in which the grantee will expense food and beverages for the participants to include attendees and staff. The grantee of the CBE Green Event is prohibited from expensing food and beverage outside of the CBE Green Industry Rally Day)
6. Alcohol or alcohol-related paraphernalia (i.e., wine glasses, mixers, beer taps, etc.)

7. Payments to a professional fundraiser to raise funds for the Grantee
8. Donations or charitable giving to non-profit organizations
9. Vehicle purchase
10. Real estate purchase
11. Lobbying the District of Columbia government
12. Lawsuits against the District of Columbia government
13. Any activity, goods, or products deemed illegal by the District of Columbia government
14. Any activity, goods, or products deemed ineligible by DSLBD in its sole discretion

5. Narrative & Budget Questions of the Application

The competitive application is divided into four (4) sections per individual grant program, which correspond directly to the scoring criteria listed in Section 6 of this document. There are also some options for uploads of additional documentation.

Contract Services Grant

A. Explain how the proposed project provides critical support to CBEs in terms of pursuing green energy-related contracts. (20 points)

1. State whether your proposal covers Proposal Development, Marketing, or Costs Estimation.
2. Provide a brief description of the overall proposed project to help grant reviewers understand the remainder of your answers.
3. Explain what area of support the project will provide for CBEs and how many CBEs will be provided support. Provide the average cost per CBE for the support intended to be provided.
4. Explain the barriers that CBEs may face in pursuing green contracts and how your proposed programming is critical for CBE success.

B. Explain how the proposal will meet the projected timelines, expenditures, and project goals. (20 points)

1. If awarded a Contract Services Grant, describe how you would use the grant dollars. Detail your proposed specific dollar amounts and expenditures in the chart. You may apply for any amount up to \$50,000. Subcontracting is only reimbursable if you are using an active CBE. If you are subcontracting, a resume of the sub-contractor and their past performance is required.

2. Provide a detailed work plan outlining each major activity of your proposal.
3. Detail your onboarding plan for CBEs for your program.
4. Explain the capacity of your business or organization to complete all the proposed tasks and expend the budget by September 30, 2024.

C. Explain past performance in the area of support proposed. (20 points)

1. Tell us who will be directly operating the proposed project and their relevant experience and credentials. Resumes may be uploaded into additional documents.
2. Detail past performance of your organization's back-office support or marketing services for small businesses. Capability statements may be uploaded in additional documents.
3. Explain your expertise related to sustainable energy and green procurement projects.

D. Tell us why this proposal will support equitable access to green and sustainable market opportunities. (20 points)

Explain how this project supports small, resident-owned, and disadvantaged CBEs with a focus on broadening equitable access to market opportunity, and explain the reporting and metrics you will track for outcomes and lessons learned.

E. Optional Additional Uploads (5 points)

1. Applicants may submit a slide deck of no more than 15 slides to help demonstrate their full proposal.
2. Applicants may choose to submit up to three (3) letters of support of any kind; letters of support may be coalition letters with multiple signatories.

CBE Green Pitch

A. Explain how the proposed project provides critical support to CBEs in building up and pursuing green energy-related contracts. (20 points)

1. Explain what area of support the project will provide for CBEs and how many CBEs will be provided support. Provide the average cost per CBE business for the support intended to be provided.
2. Explain the barriers that CBEs may face in pursuing green contracts and how your proposed programming is critical for CBE success.

B. Explain how the proposal will meet projected timelines, expenditures, and project goals. (20 points)

1. If awarded the CBE Green Pitch Grant, describe how you would use the grant dollars. Detail your proposed specific dollar amounts and expenditures in the chart. You may apply for any amount up to \$50,000. Subcontracting is only reimbursable if you are using an active CBE. If you are sub-contracting, a resume of the sub-contractor and their past performance is required.
2. Provide a detailed work plan outlining each major activity of your proposal.

C. Explain past performance in the area of support proposed. (20 points)

1. Detail your onboarding plan for CBEs for your 4-week cohort-based training program. Detail your recruitment, onboarding, and outreach plan to additionally recruit active CBEs for services.
2. Explain the capacity of your business or organization to complete all the proposed tasks and expend the budget by September 30, 2024. Explain past performance in the area of support proposed. (20 points)
3. Tell us who will be directly operating the proposed project and their relevant experience and credentials. Résumés must be uploaded in additional documents.
4. Provide a sample presentation demonstrating past performance in group trainings.

D. Optional Additional Uploads (5 points)

Applicants may choose to submit up to three (3) letters of support of any kind; letters of support may come from individuals or organizations with multiple signatories.

CBE Green Event

A. Explain past performance in the area of support proposed. (20 points) If awarded the CBE Green Event Grant, grantee will be responsible for maintaining the event budget, researching and booking the venue for the event, coordinating with stakeholders, negotiating and executing contracts, designing and printing event materials. Subcontracting is only reimbursable if you are using an active CBE. If you are sub-contracting, a résumé of the sub-contractor and their past performance is required.

1. Tell us who will be directly operating the proposed project and their relevant experience and credentials. Resumes must be uploaded in additional documents.

2. Explain your expertise related to event planning and coordinating with external stakeholders.
3. Provide a sample presentation of an event plan that includes 50-100 participants, food and beverage, and venue rental.

B. Optional Additional Uploads (5 points)

1. Applicants may submit a slide deck of no more than 15 slides to help demonstrate their full proposal.
2. Applicants may choose to submit up to three (3) letters of support of any kind; letters of support may come from individuals or organizations with multiple signatories.

CBE Green Advance Business Support Lottery

CBEs interested in applying for the CBE Green Advance Business Support Lottery Grant must have Equity Impact Enterprise (EIE) as an approved category on their CBE and attest that:

1. The business did NOT receive an FY 2023 CBE Green Business Support Lottery Grant.
2. The business is open and operating.
3. The business has actively sought and continues to pursue contracting opportunities with DC Sustainable Energy Utility (DCSEU) and other similar entities
4. The person filling out this application is the business owner or an authorized representative applying with full knowledge of the business owner.
5. The business will be able to provide full receipts and documentation of \$10,000 of qualified business expenditures, with bona fide receipts that the expenditures were made on or before September 30, 2024.
6. 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.
7. The business has completed all reporting requirements for DSLBD and DC Government grants previously received and closed in the last two (2) years.
8. The business has a business bank account that can receive electronic funds transfer if awarded the grant.
9. All information provided in the application is true and accurate.
10. The business is deemed an EIE.

6. Scoring Criteria

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

- A. Will the proposed project provide critical support to CBEs in building up and pursuing green energy related contracts? (20 points).** *This CBE All Green Grant initiative is focused on providing the following: Advanced Business Support, Contract Services (to include proposal development, costs estimation and marketing), CBE Pitch, and a CBE Green Industry Rally.*
- B. Is the proposal realistic in the projected timelines, expenditures, and project goals? (20 points).** *Projects will start in March and will need to be completed by September 30, 2024. Can the project be implemented and funds be expended in the project timeline? Only costs expended after a grant is signed sometime in March 2024 and by September 30, 2024, are eligible to be expensed against the grant.*
- C. Do the providers have past performance in the area of the support proposed? (20 points).** *Providers should have demonstrated experience in the area of the support they are proposing.*
- D. Are the proposed supports targeted to help CBEs achieve access and success in the green energy economy? (20 points).** *Proposed supports should be targeted towards CBEs achieving contract awards and performing well on subsequent contracts and subcontracts.*
- E. Will the project increase access to opportunities for small, resident-owned, and disadvantaged CBEs? (20 points).** *DSLBD supports equitable grantmaking and access to contract opportunities.*

7. Selection Process

DSLBD will select grant recipients through a competitive application process for three grants: CBE Green Contract Services Grant, CBE Green Pitch Grant, and CBE Green Event Grant. A review panel may be composed of DSLBD partners, members of the public, and

DC government employees. The panel will review eligible applications received by the submission deadline and score them against the above criteria with respective weight awarded for each category. DSLBD will select a mix of different direct services to include marketing, cost estimation, and proposal development to support CBEs.

The DSLBD program team will review the panel reviewers' recommendations and report them to the Director of DSLBD. The Director will make the final determination of grant awards.

For the fourth grant, DSLBD intends to select grant recipients through a lottery process for the CBE Green Business Support Lottery Grant. 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 approve and announce the selected grant awardees.

8. Award Information

A. Grant Award Notification

DSLBD intends on notifying selected applicants of grant awards in March 2024. All other applicants will be notified of the decision no later than one (1) week following the initial notification to selected applicants.

B. Formal Grant Agreement

Selected applicants must sign an individual grant agreement with DSLBD, which is expected to occur in March 2024. If you are a previous DSLBD grantee, your award may be contingent upon the completion of previous grant reporting. Funds may be forfeited (1) if a selected applicant refuses to sign a grant agreement during the award process, (2) fails to sign the agreement in accordance with DSLBD's timeline, (3) if the grantee cannot meet the post-award requirements for any reason, or (4) the grantee cannot make the appropriate attestations.

C. Additional Survey Assessment

DSLBD may conduct survey assessments following the execution of grant agreements. Grantees are expected to comply with the DSLBD's efforts to survey participants in the grant process.

D. Grant Reporting

The grant agreement will require ongoing documentation and reporting. Grantees must submit approved budget regarding the costs outlined in the grant with appropriate documentation. Only official receipts, cancelled checks, and other verifiable evidence of

payment will be accepted as proof of appropriate expenditures. Failure to submit documentation of proper expenditures may result in a requirement to return funds not properly accounted as expended on allowable costs.

Grantees are required to prepare a final report by October 30, 2024, providing proof of appropriate expenses made and impacts of the grant.

E. Disbursement (Payment)

The terms of disbursement shall be determined after applicants are selected but may include the collection of additional documentation such as an IRS W-9, additional proof of insurance, other applicable insurance, and ACH payment documentation. DSLBD expects most grants to be disbursed in a lump sum. The District of Columbia government will pay an invoice within thirty (30) days of receipt. **Following the execution of a grant agreement. Recipient of funds must be fully registered to receive payment via the District's payment systems or selected third party payment systems. Additionally, payment will be completed when a purchase order number has been successfully created, and the grantee successfully submits an invoice in the required system.**

F. Modifications

Additional or modified information may be required as part of a final grant agreement. An awardee who cannot provide these and other requested materials by March 22, 2024 may be disqualified, and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant.

9. Important Legal Disclaimers

This section includes the following legal disclaimers regarding the release of this RFA by DSLBD.

A. Contingent

Funding for this award is contingent on sufficient funding from the District. The RFA does not commit the Department to make an award.

B. Application Acceptance

DSLBD will not review applications that do not comply with all instructions in the RFA after the closing of the application deadline(s). DSLBD reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the Department determines it is in the best interest of the District to

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

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.

C. Notice of Funding Availability

DSLBD published the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in the DC Register on January 10, 2024 and in the OPGS Funding Alert. The NOFA is available at <http://dslbd.dc.gov/>.

D. Conflicts

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.

E. Costs of Applications

Neither DSLBD nor the District of Columbia government shall be liable for any costs incurred by an applicant in the preparation of any grant applications for a CBE Green grant. All costs incurred in developing and preparing any grant application shall be the applicant's sole responsibility.

F. Reservation of Rights

1. 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.
2. DSLBD may suspend or terminate an outstanding RFA pursuant to any other applicable local, state, or federal regulation or requirement.
3. DSLBD may conduct pre-award on-site visits to verify information submitted in a grant application and the Department's access to verify such information shall not be unreasonably withheld.

4. DSLBD is not required to consult with outside references in evaluating applications. Grant decisions may reflect applicants' performance in managing previous government grants.
5. 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.