

NOTICE OF FUNDING AVAILABILITY



WeAspire Returning Citizen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Grants: Grants that build the returning citizen business ecosystem

Updated 9/01/2019

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is excited to announce that we will be seeking applications for the 2020 **WeAspire: Returning Citizen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Grant**.

The grants are to grow and expand the mix of resources available to returning citizen business owners and aspiring owners within the District. Applicants can propose short- or longer-term programming with activities taking place between January 1 and August 30, 2020. Programming proposals can include, but are not limited to:

- One-time or multiple activations, such as skill-building workshops;
- Entrepreneurship training series;
- Creating pipeline access to pro-bono/low-bono professional services (like accounting, legal, marketing, business development); or
- Other proposed ideas as accepted by the Department.

DSLBD intends to award up to 10 grants, of between \$25,000 and \$150,000, from the \$250,000 in total available funding for 2020.

How do I apply?

Full guidance and instructions will be available in the Request for Applications (RFA) that will be released on or before September 15, 2019, on the DSLBD website: <https://dslbd.dc.gov>.

Deadline

The deadline to apply online is **November 1, 2019 at 2:00 p.m.** Applications will only be accepted through the online application system.

Who can apply?

Applicants may be for-profit businesses or non-profit entities. Those with significant connections to DC and to the returning citizen community in DC will be prioritized.

DEPARTMENT OF SMALL AND LOCAL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



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How can the funds be used?

The grant funds can be used to support programming and activities that expand the mix of resources available to DC returning citizen business owners for expenses and activities between the dates of January 1, 2020 through August 30, 2020. Additional allowed uses and restrictions will be outlined in the RFA.

How will awardees be selected?

Grant recipients will be selected through a competitive application process. All applications from eligible applicants received on or before the deadline will be forwarded to an independent review panel to be evaluated.

A program team will review the recommendations. The Director of DLSBD will make the final determination of grant awards. Grantees will be selected by December 15, 2020. Funds will be available no sooner than spring 2020, on an individual payment schedule per awarded grant.

Questions?

We encourage interested applicants to attend a *WeAspire Returning Citizen Entrepreneurial Ecosystem Grant Information Session* and will offer one or more *Grant Paperwork Bootcamps*. Please refer to the DSLBD Eventbrite at http://bit.ly/dslbd_events for the most accurate information about the date, time, and location of these meetings.

Questions may be sent to the Innovation & Equitable Development Team at the Department of Small and Local Business Development at Inno.ED@dc.gov. All questions must be submitted in writing.

Reservations

DSLBD reserves the right to issue addenda and/or amendments subsequent to the issuance of this Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) or RFA, or to rescind the NOFA or RFA at any time.