FY2023 Food Waste Innovation Grants
Official Request for Applications (RFA)

Application Period: October 26, 2022 through December 22, 2022.
Issued by the Department of Small & Local Business Development
Last Updated: October 26, 2022

The final deadline to apply is December 22, 2022 at 2 pm EST.
No Exceptions.

Look for grant information sessions at http://bit.ly/DSLBDeventbrite.
Send all questions in writing to Inno.ED@dc.gov.

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. It outlines the following important sections:

1. Objectives
What DSLBD seeks to accomplish through the grant.

2. Online Application
How eligible businesses can apply.

3. Deadlines
The Waste Assessment Deadline; Pre-eligibility Check Deadline; Ask Questions Deadline; and the Final Application Submission Deadline.

4. Eligibility Requirements
What businesses are eligible to apply & the needed paperwork.

5. Allowed & Disallowed Use of Grant Funds
How the funds can & cannot be spent.

6. Application & Selection
How to apply and how DSLBD decides awardees.

7. Award Information
What happens if you are awarded the grant.

8. Reporting Requirements
Required expense information awardees must submit.

9. Reservations
DSLBD legal reservations in addition to those listed above.

1. Objectives

The Department of Small and Local Business Development (DSLBD) is excited to announce that we will be accepting applications for the **Food Waste Innovation Grants starting October 24, 2022 and closing December 22, 2022 at 2 pm Eastern Standard Time.**

DSLBD is collaborating with community partners, including the Latino Economic Development Center (LEDC) and Compost Cab, to support small food businesses in reducing food waste. This initiative aligns with the goals of the District of Columbia's comprehensive sustainability plan, Sustainable DC 2.0, and

future requirements of DC Law 23-211, the [Zero Waste Omnibus Amendment Act of 2020](#), while simultaneously reducing food purchasing and waste disposal expenses, as well as environmental impact and rodent food sources.

Consumer-facing businesses generate 40% of the nation's food waste, which collectively costs these businesses **$54.7 billion annually**. Reducing food waste in the District's food businesses can cut costs in a particularly vulnerable industry, reduce rodents, and reduce carbon emissions. Participating restaurants can save money by reducing food waste. [One study](#) found that for every dollar invested in food waste reduction, half of the restaurants in the study saw a return of six dollars or more.

DSLBD is following this simplified version of the Food Waste Hierarchy developed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) & US Department of Agriculture (USDA), prioritizing first prevention, then recovery, followed by recycling. [ReFED](#), a national food waste research & reduction coalition, and the [National Restaurant Association](#) both have guides that outline options for businesses in all three areas.
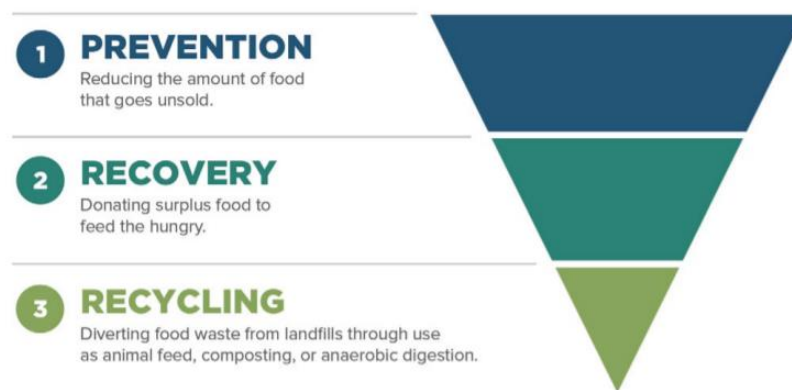
In FY 2022, food organizations in all 8 DC Wards received the Food Waste Innovation Grants from DSLBD. The Grants funded refrigeration and freezing infrastructure; investments in software to measure and manage food waste and better track inventory; equipment and staff training to improve food preparation and serving to reduce waste; onsite production of herbs and mushrooms; food preservation tools like vacuum sealers, dehydrators, and freezers; food donation programs; trash compactors combined with composting to reduce the quantity and volume of waste disposed; and more!

In this Fiscal Year 2023, licensed District food businesses with fewer than 25 full-time equivalent (FTE) employees can access food waste assessments from District-based Certified Business Enterprise (CBE) Compost Cab at any point between October 14, 2022 through March 15, 2023. They can also take advantage of Compost Credits, representing *6 free months* of food scrap collection by Compost Cab, as long as the Compost Credit funding lasts. The application for this program is *separate* and can be found at https://compostcab.com/fwig. Participation in the Compost Credits is not required to apply for these Food Waste Innovation Grants.

Food Waste Innovation Grants: DSLBD intends to award between 6 and 25 Food Waste Innovation Grants for a total of $300,000 for Fiscal Year 2023. Applicants can submit an application for the full funds required for their project, however, DSLBD may award less than the amount requested. Awards larger than $10,000 will be considered for projects with 2 or more businesses collaborating or for projects led by nonprofits collaborating with 2 or more businesses. The grant will be competitive, with all eligible

applications received before the deadline to be reviewed by an independent panel.

2. Online Application

- Only applications submitted through the online system will be accepted. No application materials will be accepted outside of the application system or past the deadline.

- DSLBD will collect additional data from applicants for the purpose of assessing the grant program design and program equity. These questions **will not** have a bearing on an applicant's eligibility.

- If a business or group of businesses submits multiple applications covering the same entities, only the most recent application submitted will be considered.

- It is recommended that applications be submitted at least 24-48 hours before the final deadline to ensure that applicants can resolve any technical difficulties if they arise. **DSLBD will not accept late applications for any reason.**

- **Review the entire RFA before applying at this link:**
  https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/FoodWasteInnovation2023

3. Deadlines

There are three deadlines that applicants should monitor.

- **Eligibility Pre-Review:** Applicants who complete their eligibility documentation before November 16, 2022 will be eligible for eligibility pre-review. DSLBD will alert applicants by November 22, 2022 whether or not they meet eligibility criteria with documents submitted and what they will need to submit to meet eligibility, if necessary.
- **Ask Questions Deadline:** The last date to ask questions about the grant application is December 20, 2022, 2 pm Eastern Standard Time. Questions asked after this time cannot be guaranteed a response prior to the application deadline. Questions must be asked over email to Inno.ed@dc.gov or in a Question & Answer session (each of which will be recorded). *More detail on how to ask questions is available at the end of this RFA.*
- **Final Application Submission Deadline:** The final application deadline is December 22, 2022 at 2 pm Eastern Standard Time. No Exceptions.

4. Eligibility Requirements
The following types of organizations are eligible to apply for this grant:
1. For-profit, District-based food system businesses with a valid District business license. Businesses must be producing, processing, or serving food or beverages. Businesses must attest to being independently and/or locally owned and must attest to having 25 full time equivalent

(FTE) employees or fewer.

2. Nonprofits that will be directly managing shared infrastructure or programming for two or more businesses that meet criteria in 4.1. **Nonprofits will need to submit letters of support signed by each partner business** including the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Employer Identification Number (EIN) and Basic Business License (BBL) for each business partner, as well as attestations by the business regarding their eligibility.

The following eligibility documentation is required for all businesses, no exceptions.

Eligibility Checklist & Necessary Eligibility Documentation:	
Business Formalized	EIN available for free at IRS.gov and DUN & Bradstreet Number (DUNS Number) available for free at dnb.com under D-U-N-S Number.
Clean Hands Compliant	DC Office of Tax and Revenue (OTR)-issued clean hands certificate in the name of the business, under the business EIN, verifiable against the OTR public database in MyTax.DC.Gov. (https://otr.cfo.dc.gov/page/certificate-clean- hands). The document must be dated October 1, 2022 or later.
Business Licensing Compliant	Valid Business License Number for the business verifiable against DC Regulatory Agency (DCRA)'s business license database (https://dcra.dc.gov/service/verify-basic-business- license) or upload of alternative licensure if a DCRA BBL is not required.
Prepared for Tax Reporting	Current IRS W-9 https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/fw9.pdf
Hold General Liability Insurance	Certificate of Insurance for the Period of Performance (February 1, 2023 – August 31, 2023). If the business owns a vehicle and/or has employees, vehicle insurance and/or workman's compensation may be required.

In addition to providing eligibility documentation, applicants must make several attestations regarding the applicant business. It is important that applicants answer these attestations accurately and honestly, as the owner applicant is making a legal claim to the truthfulness and reliability of these statements.

These attestations will be in the online application.

Business Attestation Check List	
Business Operation	Attest that the business is open and operating in the District. Businesses that are not open AND operating are not eligible.
Business Size	Attest that the business has 25 or fewer Full-Time-Equivalent (FTE) Employees.
Food or Beverage Business	Attest that the business is producing, processing, or serving food or beverages.
No Double Dipping	Attest that the business has not been funded for this project or 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.
Accountability	Attest that the business has completed all reporting requirements for DSLBD and DC Government grants previously received and closed in the last two years. *Failure to complete reporting for previous DSLBD direct to small business grant rounds will result in disqualification from this grant round.*
Can Receive Electronic Funds	Attest that the business has a business bank account that can receive electronic funds transfer if awarded the grant. (Businesses should have separate bank accounts from personal accounts.)
Full Accuracy	Attest that all information provided in the application is true and accurate.

All documentation is subject to verification.

- Unverifiable information will result in the application being disqualified.
- Applications from businesses and nonprofits that have demonstrably failed to meet reporting requirements on previous DC Government and DSLBD grants will be deemed ineligible.
- Failure to meet any requirement of the application and eligibility criteria by the application deadline will result in the application being disqualified as ineligible.
- Failure to represent the factual truth honestly and accurately in the attestations may result in being disqualified, forfeiture of an awarded grant, or greater penalties as appropriate.

5. Allowed & Disallowed Use of Grant Funds

Grant funds have several allowed uses and several restricted uses. The "Period of Performance" is February 1, 2023 through August 31, 2023. All expenses funded by this grant must occur during this time.

The proposed use of funds must be accepted by DSLBD and may not be used for any of the disallowed uses listed below. DSLBD will consider eligible uses that support your business towards the vision of the grant.

Allowed Expenses: DSLBD will explicitly allow grant reimbursement for expenses for the applicant business that cover:
1. Food storage infrastructure, including refrigerators, freezers, walk-in coolers, or rodent-proof dry storage.
2. Packaging, trays, or other types of containers for food donation.
3. Staff or consultants: training, menu redesign, software upgrades, food processing, or piloting new cross-utilization of ingredients (using parts of ingredients that aren't used in another recipe, such as stems or peels).
4. Packaging, labeling, and/or marketing to promote a new line of food or a new menu item: either through cross utilization, repurposed ingredients or made of rescued food in some way.
5. Measurement software, scales, or other tools to measure and track food waste.
6. Software to track inventory or food waste.
7. Materials and supplies for onsite food production, preservation, or processing, all to maximize food utilization and reduce food waste.
8. On-site waste processing: can include composters, dehydrators, shredders, or compactors, as well as essential associated installation costs.
9. Food scraps collection infrastructure or food scraps collection fees.
10. Food transportation logistics for surplus food: for example, this can enable ingredient utilization between businesses of specific surplus streams (coffee grounds, spent grain, etc.). This could also cover costs of food donation transit and food donation coordination and/or transporting food scraps to a local farm or food processing site.
11. Consumer education to communicate the benefits of food waste innovation within the business.
12. Other costs DSLBD determines are acceptable.

Grant Funds CANNOT be used for the following Expenses

Category	Ineligible Costs
Food	Food and beverages include items intended for consumption: raw, cooked, or processed edible substances, ingredients, ice, water, or any other beverages.
Alcohol	Alcohol or alcohol-related paraphernalia: wine glasses, mixers, beer taps, etc.
Donations	Donations or charitable giving to nonprofit organizations.
Fundraisers	Payments to a professional fundraiser to raise funds for the grantee.
Legal	Legal guidance, services or assistance to bring legal charges against the District of Columbia Government.
Lobbying	Any expense associated with lobbying officials, elected or appointed, of the District of Columbia Government.
Undocumented Expenses	Expenses not documented or improperly documented.

Illegal Expenses	Any expense that is illegal in the District.
Other	Any expense otherwise deemed disallowed by DSLBD in its sole discretion.

6. The Application & Selection Process

A. Application

The application includes 4 key sections:

- Contact Information

- Eligibility Documentation

- Narrative of Food Waste Innovation Project Description ("Narrative Project Description")

- Proposed Budget (including funds requested, as well as in-kind or financial match, if any)

The Narrative Project Description is broken into 5 sections, which correspond to the scoring criteria in the Selection Process listed in section 7.C. below. Character values below are maximum character limits. These numbers are high to increase equity in grant applications, but responses *do not* need to be this length or even near it. Concise responses are appreciated.

I. **Tell us how your goals are reasonable and achievable in the time available. (20 points, 20%)**
   1. Describe your business or businesses' current operations, particularly the current waste management system. (2500 characters)
   2. Describe the project you plan to implement if awarded this grant. (2500 characters)
   3. What is the project's timeline? Describe what will happen when. (2500 characters)
II. **Tell us how the project will make the most of food onsite or within the community, divert edible food, and/or keep food waste out of the landfill. (20 points, 20%)**
   1. How much food waste does your business (or do your partner businesses) currently generate? How much is front of house vs. back of house? What can you share about the particular waste streams? Feel free to estimate if you do not have details. Volume (by number of garbage cans or other units) is acceptable, as is weight. (2500 characters)
   2. How much food waste will this project reduce, divert, donate and/or recycle? How are you focusing on upstream food waste reductions, with a focus on reduction and donation? (2500 characters)
III. **Tell us how else you will benefit your community, in terms of benefiting residents and reduction of rodents & other pests. (20 points, 20%)**
   1. How will this project benefit the community, including neighbors or other residents? Consider sourcing, food donation, and lower cost food sales to reduce waste. (2500 characters)
   2. How will this project reduce rodents in your area? (2500 characters)
IV. **Tell us how your proposed program will use your allocated funds efficiently and**

effectively. (20 points, 20%):
1. If awarded the grant, describe how you would use the funds. Make sure that your use of funds matches your project's description.
2. Detail your proposed expenses in the budget chart, including any in-kind OR financial match that your organization is providing, if any. Note that no match is required to receive this grant.
3. Explain how/why this grant is necessary to help you invest in food waste reduction. Particularly if you are matching funds, explain why you need more than you currently have available. (2500 characters)
4. Nonprofits will be required to upload annual budget in the Documentation tab of the application.

V. **Tell us what makes this project innovative: how does it add on or build from what is already happening in the business, community, and/or District as a whole. (20 points, 20%)**
1. How does this project build on or add to what is already happening in your business or business group, in terms of food waste reductions and community impact? (2500 characters)
2. How does this project push your sector and the District further in food waste reduction? How is this project new for the District? Feel free to include how you are applying lessons from other cities or sectors to your own or to DC. (2500 characters)

B. Selection Process

Following the closing of the Application Submission Deadline, DSLBD will review and disqualify applications that do not comply with the instructions in this RFA. DSLBD will notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. DSLBD reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if it determines it is in the best interest of the District to do so.

Applications for Food Waste Innovation Grants that are not disqualified for non-compliance with RFA instructions, will be reviewed by an Independent Grant Review Committee (IGRC) consisting of Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) regarding either restaurant operations and/or waste management. The eligible applications will be evaluated and scored based on the percentages listed in the questions above. Please note that each section is worth 20 points, or 20 percent of the overall score.

An additional 5 points will be allocated to businesses in specific rodent hot spot areas, as named by DC Health. DC Health has identified the following locations as commercial corridors with high rodent activity: 14th & U Sts NW, 14th & P Sts NW, Wisconsin & M St NW, 13th & H Sts NE, E Capitol St & Benning Rd NE, S Capitol & Atlantic Sts SE, 8th & D Sts SE, 7th & C Sts SE, 17th St & Benning Rd NE, 5th & Kennedy Sts NW, and the 6200 Block of Georgia Ave NW. A map of these corridors is available here.

Final Selection
After the IGRC provides its recommendations to DSLBD staff, the DSLBD Director will make the final determination of grant awards.

7. Award Information

Grant Award Notification
Grant notification announcements of selected awards will be made in late January or early February 2023. All other applicants will be notified no later than two weeks after the initial notification is made to selected applicants.

Grant Agreement
Selected grantees must sign a grant agreement with DSLBD, which anticipates executing grant agreements in February 2023. If agreements are unable to be executed by March 1, 2023 because the awarded grantee cannot meet the post-award requirements for any reason, then the grant funds to the applicant may be forfeited and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant. If you are a previous DSLBD grantee, your award may be contingent upon completion of previous delinquent grant reporting.

Modifications
Additional or modified information may be required as part of a final grant agreement. An awardee that cannot provide these and other requested materials by March 1, 2023 may be disqualified and DSLBD may award the grant to another applicant.

Budget Adjustments
After approval for a grant award, applicants may be required to submit a revised budget with an estimate of how they would use their requested funding since projects may be funded at a lower level than applied for. Applicants should be prepared to explain whether or not they could conduct their project at a lower budget than requested.

Grant Disbursement
Terms of disbursement shall be determined after applicants are selected but may include the collection of additional documentation such as a W9, proof of insurance, and ACH payment documentation (for electronic fund transfer) for the organization's bank account.

DC Government pays all invoices within thirty (30) days of receipt of invoice. **This timeline does not start until after an executed grant agreement is in place, a recipient is fully registered to receive payment, an invoice has been submitted, and the invoice is approved.**

Grants to businesses are generally treated as taxable income both locally and federally. Businesses should seek further guidance from a tax professional regarding tax implications of a grant award.

Grant Reporting
The grant agreement will require additional documentation and reporting. This will include an approved budget and only costs outlined under the grant with appropriate documentation (receipts) will be accepted as proof of appropriate expenditures.

Grantees are required to prepare a final report by September 30, 2023, providing a proof of appropriate expenses made and impacts of the grant.

8. Reporting Requirements

Recipients will be required to submit two brief reports along with proof of expenses by May 31 and September 30, 2023.

Proof of Expenditure Submission Requirements:

1. Proof of expenditures may be submitted in the form of dated receipts, dated invoices with proof of payment, or bank/credit card statements. *Non-responsive information (expenses for which the business is not requesting reimbursement, balances, overdue notices) on bank/credit card statements may be redacted to protect the privacy of the business; this is encouraged.*
2. All uploaded receipts and documentation must be clearly legible.
3. Receipts under $500 must be batched into files of $500 or more, with an included list of each receipt.
4. Any change of more than 10% from the budget initially submitted will require written approval from DSLBD.

Project Impact Reporting Requirements:
1. Midterm and final reports will be brief and submitted via online form. They will require answering a few key questions for DSLBD that will be aggregated across all businesses for citywide reporting:
   a. Food Donated (lbs. and/or $ value)
   b. Food Scraps Composted (lbs.)
   c. Project Challenges
   d. Project Successes
   e. Any additional food waste diversion projects implemented
2. Final project report will be required to stay in good standing with DSLBD's future grants.

Grantee must comply with all federal requirements regarding use of ARPA funds and record-keeping. The citation for ARPA is Pub. L. 117-2 (Mar. 11, 2021). Also see 42 U.S.C. 802 et seq, the Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund; and 2 CFR 200.331(b).

9. Reservations

This section includes reservations that DSLBD makes in releasing this RFA.

A. Application Acceptance

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

B. Notice of Funding Availability

DSLBD published the Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA) in the DC Register and the OPGS Funding

Alert. The NOFA is available at http://bit.ly/dslbd_grants.

C. Legal Disclaimers

What follows are important legal disclaimers that DSLBD makes in releasing this RFA.

Funding for any grant award is contingent on available funding.

Publication of this Request for Applications does not commit DSLBD to make any awards.

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. The RFA does not commit the DSLBD to make an award.

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

DSLBD reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if DSLBD determines that it is in the best interest of the District to do so.

DSLBD shall not be liable for any costs incurred by an applicant in the preparation of one or more applications for this grant. The applicant understands and agrees that all costs incurred in developing and preparing any grant application shall be the applicant's sole responsibility.

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

DSLBD serves as its own reference in evaluating applications.

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.

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.

Questions?

DSLBD will hold information sessions and Question and Answer sessions once per week during the grant application period as advertised via the DSLBD Eventbrite at: dslbd.eventbrite.com. These sessions will be recorded and made available to all applicants.

All other questions will be answered via email only by DSLBD staff Caroline Howe and Kate Mereand via the Inno.ED@dc.gov email address. Please submit all questions not asked in an live session to Inno.ED@dc.gov. No questions will be answered over telephone calls.