

FY2022 Food Waste Innovation Grants

Official Request for Applications (RFA)

Application Period: Dec 13, 2021 through January 31, 2022.

Issued by the Department of Small & Local Business Development (DSLBD).

Last Updated: December 10, 2021



**The final deadline to apply is January 31, 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 must 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 December 10, 2021 and closing January 31, 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 to reduce food waste. This aligns with the goals of [Sustainable DC 2.0](#) and future requirements of the [Zero Waste Omnibus Act](#), 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, and food waste 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](#), [LeanPath](#), and the [National Restaurant Association](#) all have guides that outline options for businesses in all three areas.



Through one application, eligible food businesses can apply to receive:

- **Virtual or in-person food waste assessment:** This assessment can be done in-person or virtually and will provide recommendations to each business on how to reduce food waste. These will be free and available for all applicants after providing Eligibility documentation and answering Program Entry & Eligibility questions. This is not required for applying for the Food Waste Innovation Grants but is encouraged; to guarantee completing your assessment before the Food Waste Innovation Grant deadline, you must submit Eligibility & Program Entry by January 6th.
- **Compost Credit:** 100 businesses will be selected for \$1,000 in credit for food scraps collection for composting. For many small businesses, this will cover 6 months of food scraps collection. The Food Waste Assessment will evaluate how long your \$1,000 credit will cover. Applications for Compost Credit will be selected by lottery by District of Columbia (DC or District) Ward.
- **Food Waste Innovation Grants:** DSLBD intends to award between 6 and 20 Food Waste Innovation Grants for a total of \$300,000 for Fiscal Year 2022. Applicants can submit for the full funds required for their project, but DSLBD may award less than the amount requested. Awards larger than \$10,000 will be considered for projects with 2 or more businesses collaborating. 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 you 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/FoodWasteInnovation>

3. Deadlines

There are four deadlines that applicants should monitor.

- **Waste Audit Pre-review:** Each Wednesday from December 15, 2021 until January 5, 2022, eligible applicants who express interest in a food waste assessment will be connected with an external partner for a free food waste assessment to assess best next steps regarding food waste reductions. After the audit, applicants can decide whether to complete the more detailed Food Waste Innovation Grant application or enter the lottery for \$1,000 credit for compost collection.
- **Eligibility Pre-Review:** Applicants who complete their eligibility documentation before January 12, 2022 will be eligible for eligibility pre-review. DSLBD will alert applicants by January 21, 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 January 26, 2022, 2 pm Eastern. Questions asked after this time cannot be guaranteed a response prior to application deadline.
- **Final Application Submission Deadline:** The final deadline is January 31, 2022 at 2 pm Eastern. No Exceptions.

4. Eligibility Requirements

The following types of organizations are eligible for this grant:

1. For-profit, District-based food system businesses with 25 full time employees (FTE) employees or fewer. Businesses that are processing, producing, or serving food or beverages. Businesses must attest to being independently and/or locally owned, having headquarters in the District, and having the majority of operations (measured by assets, gross receipts, or employees) in the District.
2. Nonprofits that will be directly managing shared infrastructure or programming for one 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 Documentation Checklist	
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, 2021 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 (March 1, 2022 – September 30, 2022). 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 truth of these statements.

These attestations will be in the online application.

Business Attestation Check List	
District Ownership / Employees	Attest the business, or business being supported, is either - Independently owned, operated, and controlled; or - More than 50% owned, operated, and controlled by a District based enterprise or not-for-profit business; or - Owned by a non-District-based business enterprise or not-for-profit business that is more than 50% owned by District residents
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 or processing food or beverages on-site.
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 DSBLD and DC Government grants previously received and closed in the last two years. <i>Failure to complete reporting for previous DSLBD direct to small business grant rounds will result in disqualification from this grant round.</i>
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 March 1, 2022 through September 30, 2022. 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 uses that support your business.

Allowed Expenses: DSLBD will explicitly allow grant reimbursement for expenses for the applicant business that cover:

1. Refrigeration or freezing infrastructure along with other food storage infrastructure: must verify that the expense can decrease food waste and/or increase food donation.
2. Food distribution containers for food donation: individual or larger containers.
3. Staff or consultants to redesign menu to maximize ingredient cross-utilization.
4. Packaging, labeling, and/or marketing to promote a new line of upcycling food that otherwise would be wasted.
5. Measurement software, scales, or other tools to measure and track food waste.
6. Software to track inventory or food waste, such as Lean Path.
7. On-site waste processing: can include composters, dehydrators, shredders, or compactors, as well as essential associated installation costs.
8. Food waste collection infrastructure or food waste collection fees.
9. Transportation logistics to enable food donation, transporting food scraps to another food processing site.
10. Other costs DSLBD determines are acceptable.

Disallowed Expenses: The grant funds cannot be used for any of the following:

1. Expenses incurred before March 1, 2022 or after September 30, 2022.
2. Expenses that are reimbursed by a different grant from DC Government.
3. Assistance to bring legal charges against the District of Columbia.
4. Any interior or exterior construction not permitted by DC Code.
5. Any undocumented expense.
6. Any expense deemed by DSLBD to be for a purpose outside the purpose and mission of the grant.

6. The Application & Selection Process

A. Application

The application includes two segments that all applicants must complete for the Food Waste Assessment, the Compost Credit **and/or** the Food Waste Innovation Grants:

- Contact Information
- Eligibility Documentation
- Program Entry Questions

Applicants seeking funding from the Food Waste Innovation Grant will also complete:

- 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 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 totes, 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 will you 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 and past 3 years of taxes (or as many years as you have been in operation) 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, 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 the RFA. The agency will notify the applicant if it rejects that applicant's proposal. The agency reserves the right to accept or deny any or all applications if the agency determines it is in the best interest of the District to do so.

Each of the three program offerings – Food Waste Assessments, Compost Credit, and Food Waste Innovation Grants – has a distinct selection process:

- All interested and eligible applicants will be matched with a virtual or in-person food waste assessment.
- Applications for the \$1,000 of Compost Credit will first be reviewed for eligibility. All applications that are not disqualified for non-compliance with the RFA instructions will be entered into a lottery system that will run in three rounds: first, for applications from rodent hot spots (see below); then, in a Ward-based lottery system selecting equal numbers from each Ward; then, in a citywide lottery.
- 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 following criteria will be used to evaluate all eligible applications for the Food Waste Innovation Grants. Applicants are recommended to review their submissions against these scoring criteria before submitting a final application.

Food Waste Innovation Grant Review Criteria

- I. **Are the goals reasonable and achievable in the time available (6-7 months)? (20 points, 20%)**
- II. **How will the project make the most of food on site, divert edible food to people, and/or keep food waste out of the landfill? (20 points, 20%)**
- III. **What is the community impact of the project, in terms of benefits for residents and reduction of rodents & other pests? (20 points, 20%)**
- IV. **Does the project demonstrate an efficient use of funds? Does this project leverage available funds and the financial and in-kind match effectively? (20 points, 20%)**

V. How does 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%)

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, 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 agency 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 on or around February 18-28, 2022. 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; the agency anticipates executing grant agreements between February 18 – 28, 2022. If agreements are unable to be executed by March 15, 2022 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 15, 2022 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 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, 2022, providing a proof of appropriate expenses made and impacts of the grant.

COVID

The grantee(s) selected in response to this Request for Applications is/are required to comply with Mayor's Order 2021-099, COVID-19 Vaccination Certification Requirement for District Government Employees, Contractors, Interns, and Grantees, dated August 10, 2021, and all substantially similar vaccine requirements including any modifications to Mayor's Order 2021-099, unless and until they are rescinded or superseded.

8. Reporting Requirements

Recipients will be required to submit two brief reports along with proof of expenses on June 30 and September 30, 2022.

Proof of Expenditure Submission Requirements:

1. Proof of expenditures may be submitted in the form of dated receipts, dated invoices with a paid status, 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.

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 Agency 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 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 information session to Inno.ED@dc.gov. No questions will be answered over telephone calls.